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THE THREE FRIGATES: or, Old Ironsides' Revenge.

A SEQUEL TO "THE SAUCY JANE, PRIVATEER."

BY CAPTAIN FRED. WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "NEMO, KING OF THE TRAMPS," "RED RUDIGER," "THE RUSSIAN SPY," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," "THE MAN IN RED," "DEATH'S HEAD CUIRASSIERS," "PHANTOM KNIGHTS," ETC., ETC.



"I MUST SURRENDER MYSELF A PRISONER OF WAR."

The Three Frigates;

OR,

OLD IRONSIDES' REVENGE.

The Story of a Year of Glory.

(A Sequel to the "Saucy Jane, Privateer.")

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE FLYING DUTCHMAN OF 1880,"
"THE UNKNOWN SPORT," "THE FOG-
DEVILS," "THE RED RAJAH,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST FRIGATE.

BRIGHT are the summer waves of the sea, when the rays of the sun in heaven send a splendor of gold over every foam-bubble; when the flying fish are leaping out of the billows in the wantonness of their play.

On such a day no sight on God's earth can be found more beautiful than a ship on a sea roughened by the breezes that fill every stitch of canvas she can stretch, from her broad yards and long stunsail booms on either side of her tall masts.

Just such a sight was to be seen, in the middle of the broad Atlantic, in the month of August, 1812; where a large ship, with the peculiar accoutrements that marked a frigate, was standing to the southwest, under the influence of those soft, regular "trade-winds," that aroused so much superstitious wonder among the companions of Columbus, four hundred years before, when they first realized that Nature had many secrets unrevealed, and that the isles of the fabled Atlantis might yet be found.

The ship was one that would be called small in these days of two-thousand-ton vessels; but in those times, when six hundred tons was considered an exceptional size, she was called a "first-class frigate." On her upper floor, called the "spar-deck," frowned some caronades, that looked massive and dangerous; though there were only ten of them, disposed on the forecastle and quarter-deck; with a single long pivot-gun at the bow; but the great strength of her battery lay below, on the "gun-deck," where rows of long guns—nineteen of a side—showed her real powers of resistance to a foe.

Her build was of that kind which indicates speed and strength, in a just combination; though not of the fine lines of the modern clipper. She was a ship that had seen a good deal of service; for her sides were washed by the sea, so that the paint looked decidedly dingy. On the whole, this gallant frigate bore the appearance of a warrior that had been to the wars so long that his armor had gotten rusty and stained, leaving him as fit as ever for the battle, but not a good subject for dress-parade.

Out there in the open ocean, where the billows are so free and wide that the mind broadens with them, such little things as a deficiency of paint are of no importance; and the great ship looked none the worse for her long tour of service, for she had been on a cruise of six months, during which she had never seen a port, and was now on her home run, toward the West India station (whence she had come in the first instance) to get fresh provisions and refit.

The bows of the frigate were ornamented by the figure of a woman warrior in armor, a lofty helmet on her head, a sword in her hand, with which she seemed to threaten the waves. On her stern was no name; but if you went on board you might see, on the round hats of some of the sailors, the word "GUERRIERE," and know from this that they belonged to the captain's gig of his Britannic Majesty's ship, Guerriere.

The Guerriere was a proud ship, and had a prouder captain—the Honorable Charles Augustus Dacres—at a time when a British post-captain was a sort of demi-god, with unlimited power over the lives and happiness of about four hundred men; a position which made its holder a despot, whether he was inclined that way or not.

Captain Dacres was walking the deck, with the step of a man who is used to having his own way. The ship had the wind on her quarter; there was no special advantage in one side or the other; so captain Dacres paced the starboard side of the poop, in solitary dignity, while Mr. Sharpe, "first luff," headed the little file of officers that followed each other like geese going to pasture, on the port side, just below the captain.

A mite of a midshipman, with a fresh, boyish face, and that air of preternatural sharpness that distinguished the midshipman of those days, was taking his own little walk below the officers, his weather eye open to what was going on, all round the horizon, and his weather ear still wider open for any scraps of conversation that might be dropped by his superiors in office, and retailed by himself for the benefit of the "young gentlemen" in the cockpit at the fast-

approaching dinner-hour. This youngster's name was Rous, and he had the distinction of belonging to a lord's family, being the heir presumptive to an earldom and twenty thousand a year on the death of a cousin, who was said to be drinking himself into his grave as fast as he could. "Tommy Rous," he was called in the cockpit: "Mr. Rous" on the quarter-deck; "Little Needles" in the forecastle, by the sailors, when they spoke of his sharpness at finding out all the spirits smuggled on board any boat under his command. "Little Needles" was of that abbreviated stature that comes of too early induction into the mysteries of hot-rum-and-sugar, and too many love affairs with ladies of all parts of the world.

The ship was sailing along in that tranquil way peculiar to the latitudes of the trade-winds, when the master came on deck; and all the officers began to fidget about and go below in squads, to get their quadrants, to "take the sun," along with the navigator of the frigate. "Little Needles," with all the gravity of a lord, went below for his own, though the altitudes and computations of that small navigator were the jest of the cockpit and gun-room alike, and it was a common saying that, "if Rous found the sun at fifty-six altitude, it was pretty sure he was not more than ten or twelve degrees out of the way." However, as Mr. Rous was now engaged in studying to pass his examination, he was obliged to work his altitudes every day, under penalty of another plucking the next time he went before the board.

The master was an old salt, of the days when masters were held to be a sort of upper seamen, with no hope of ever rising higher than the position he then occupied, as not belonging to the "gentle" classes. He understood his duties as well as any man in the service, and was noted as a first-class navigator and a skillful seaman, who never lost his head in any emergency. His name was Morris, and he came from the classic precincts of Wapping Old Stairs, the nursery of sailors and profanity, from time immemorial. Mr. Morris took his altitudes, and after a short pause, for the simple calculations then in vogue, touched his hat to Captain Dacres, and announced to that potentate that "it was twelve o'clock."

The august captain touched his own hat in reply, and said, in his stiffest quarter-deck manner:

"Very good, sir. Make it twelve, then, if you please."

Morris turned away to the first lieutenant, and informed him, with the captain's compliments, that "it was twelve o'clock, and was to be made so forthwith."

The first lieutenant took down his own quadrant from his eye. He was very proud of his ability as a navigator, and was always trying to catch the master in some error of observation, to poke fun at him at the ward-room dinner.

That day, however, there was no excuse for the smallest variation. The quadrants agreed exactly; therefore the first lieutenant could only say:

"Very good, sir. Tell the quartermaster to strike eight bells."

The clang of the ship's bell had hardly died away over the waves, when the cry of the lookout from the foretop-gallant cross-trees came down on deck:

"Sail ho!"

The cry produced different emotions in the minds of the officers on the quarter-deck of the Guerriere. The captain turned his head sharply to the fore part of the ship, and rapped out:

"Whereaway, whereaway?"

The first luff, thinking of promotion and dinner at the same time, had a divided aspect.

The midshipmen, who thought only of dinner, wore a look of very keen disgust and disappointment; for they foresaw that the ship would be put on a course to catch the stranger, and that it was very likely all hands would be called, and the whole ship's company kept out of dinner for an hour or more.

To their great relief, the lookout called down:

"Dead ahead, sir, on the starboard bow. A schooner on the port tack, crossing the frigate's course, steering southeast."

All the glasses on the quarter-deck were leveled at the spot indicated by the seaman, and the officers could see that the lookout had spoken the truth. The sails of a schooner of the "fore-and-aft rig," then peculiar to American vessels, was crossing the bows of the Guerriere, steering southeast, her hull yet hidden below the curvature of the earth; but the great height of her sails showing that she was a vessel of no mean size.

The first lieutenant ventured to hint to the captain:

"We can catch that fellow without calling the hands, sir, I think."

Captain Dacres nodded.

"Ay, ay; let the men go to dinner, Mr. Sharpe. Keep the ship on her present course, and call me when we get within gunshot."

The first lieutenant looked immensely relieved as the august chief turned his back on the rest and descended into his cabin to eat his dinner. The deck was soon left to the officer of the

watch and his hungry and silent mariners, who were wishing for the time when they could follow the rest of their shipmates to the noonday meal.

The noble frigate kept on her course for the next half-hour, and by the time the captain came on deck, the stranger was not more than five miles off, with her white sails shining in the sun, as she stretched across the way of the Guerriere, and threatened to get out of gunshot without altering her course.

She had come from the northwest and was standing to the southeast, with the trade-wind broad on her port beam, sailing on what is called an "easy bowline," the best point of a vessel of her class.

She was covered with canvas from hull to truck; her jibs and staysails all spread to the wind, with every rag set that would draw.

Mr. Sharpe was the first officer that reached the deck after dinner, and he surveyed the schooner with an air of some admiration, observing to his second in rank:

"Pretty little thing that, Hughes, isn't she! Sails like a witch. Sha'n't stand much chance of catching her, if she once gets past. We must look out she don't do it. She's a Yankee, as sure as a gun."

Lieutenant Hughes was a Welshman, and consequently very cautious in the expression of his opinions. He merely nodded, and replied:

"Very probable, sir."

The courses of the two vessels continued to converge, till Sharpe sent down word to the captain:

"That the schooner would be within gunshot very soon, and that the commander might like to be on deck at such a time."

Captain Dacres came on deck at the heels of the midshipman who had brought the summons—Little Needles, by the way—and as soon as he saw the stranger fairly, said to Sharpe:

"Mr. Sharpe, don't you think you have seen that schooner before?"

Sharpe looked as wise as he could, and answered:

"Think not, sir."

Dacres was a very haughty man, of much superior education to the generality of sea-captains, in those days of good seamanship and swearing. He never let an oath drop from his lips, beyond a gentle "dammit," so it was with that innocent oath that he reproached his executive, as he said:

"Why, dammit, man, don't you remember the saucy little schooner that got in the way when we were chasing the Yankee frigate Constitution, and had the impudence to fire at the Belvidera? Byron was furious about it. We had a good deal of fun chaffing him about losing so many men from the fire of a bit of a hooker that only carries one gun. That looks to me very like the same schooner, Sharpe."

Sharpe looked at the schooner, still crossing the bows of the ship, and replied slowly:

"I am not sure, Captain Dacres, that I remember her distinctly; but I'll swear that she is a Yankee, whoever she is, and that is enough for me. Shall we give her a shot, sir?"

"A shot! Of course, Sharpe, and mind you don't make the same mistake Byron did. That little schooner, if she is the same I mean, carries one gun heavier than any on board this frigate."

Sharpe stared at his commander in amazement, as he ejaculated:

"Heavier than any in this ship, sir! Why she surely cannot have any long eighteens on board."

Dacres shook his head as he answered:

"Byron assured me that the gun she fired at the Belvidera was at least a twenty-four pounder. I can hardly believe it, myself, but we shall find out very soon. Don't fire a shot till you are sure we are in fair range of our own guns. I don't care a bit for his long twenty-four, if I can get close enough to him to use my long eighteens; but it would be awkward to be crippled by a little bit of a thing like that, out in the middle of the Atlantic, just as we are going into port. I should never bear the last of it. Keep on the present course till you are quite sure we are all right to hit him, and then let the ship take care of herself."

The Guerriere stood on for another mile or so, when the captain asked for the gunner; and that worthy officer came aft and was closely questioned by the commander, as to the probable distance of the stranger, and the carrying capacity of the main-deck guns.

After hearing his report, Captain Dacres ordered the ship's course to be changed slightly, and sent down word to "have the men sent to quarters as fast as possible, but to beat no drums, and to have everything as quiet as possible."

He took the trumpet into his own hand as a signal of authority; and ordered one or two additional sails spread; so as to increase the speed of the ship to the utmost degree possible; then paced the deck, nervously watching the schooner that was all the time drawing nearer and nearer.

At last he thought that he was in that position that the small craft could not by any possibility escape, and he gave the order:

"Mr. Sharpe, go below, please, and point one of the main-deck guns, that will bear if we yaw a little. See if you can cripple that schooner by the first shot. I have a particular desire to take her into Kingston with me, if I can. If you succeed in the shot, I will see that its effect is felt in my report."

Mr. Sharpe touched his hat and went down to the gun-deck where he found the men standing at the guns, in the silence always enforced "at quarters." He went forward to the gun next to the starboard bow, and ordered it loaded; then sent up word to the captain that he "was ready, and that, if the ship would alter her course so as to give him a chance, he would try what he could do for the credit of the service." He knew that he had been asked to go down because he was known to be the best shot in the ship, and that it was expected of him that he would at the very least bring down a spar of some kind from the saucy stranger, that was standing across the bow of a British frigate, as if her commander had no fears of the result of a contest between antagonists so greatly unequal in size.

Captain Dacres looked at the little schooner as he received Sharpe's message, and ordered the helm shifted a few points, with a change in the position of the sails that brought the Guerriere on the same tack as the schooner, with her head to the southeast, standing toward the stranger, as if resolved to cut her off from her course.

As soon as this had been accomplished, the captain waited quietly for the gun below to speak, and he had not long to wait.

A minute of suspense followed; then the loud boom of one of the Guerriere's long eighteens told that the chase had begun, and that the haughty English ship had thundered her challenge to the audacious stranger to show her colors.

But as the gazers in the Guerriere watched the effect of the shot, it was seen that it was no mere challenge, but a missile sent with intent to do the utmost amount of damage. The gun was shotted and pointed with an accuracy that sent its contents whizzing over the tops of the waves, just skimming the crests as it went, till it struck the schooner on the end of the jib-boom, and sent a little cloud of canvas flying from the end of her pile of jibs, leaving her without the last of the sails that had been swelling so proudly on her trim spars.

CHAPTER II.

THE YANKEE PRIVATEER.

A CHEER went up from the sailors of the frigate as they saw the effect of the shot; for the first impulse of a sailor is to cheer under all circumstances. The captain looked pleased, and observed:

"Good shot, Sharpe," thought that gentleman could not bear him. Then he said to the nearest midshipman:

"Mr. Rous, give my compliments to Mr. Sharpe, and tell him that a repetition of that shot would please me very much— Ah, there goes his flag at last, and if the scamp hasn't the impudence to hoist it in my very face, as if he gloried in it."

Indeed, the little schooner that had crossed the course of the frigate in such an audacious manner, not even seeking to evade her by a single tack, had hoisted her colors as soon as the shot struck her. Sailing, as the two vessels were at the time, on the same tack—that is, with the wind on the same side—the sailors of the Guerriere could see the flag as it rose to the peak of the schooner's mainsail. The soft breath of the trade-wind filled the folds of the bunting, and the Stars and Stripes floated out to the sunlight, at the same time that the English ensign went up to the peak of the frigate's spanker.

There was no longer any doubt in the minds of the people in either vessel of the character of the other.

Yet the crew of the little Yankee schooner did not seem to be in the least alarm at the dangerous proximity of the frigate. She kept on her course, and they could see her men on the jib-boom, securing the remains of the flying jib that had been shot away by that fortunate aim of Sharpe. The sail was gotten in, out of the way, and the schooner continued to stand on, with the same imperturbability. Presently another gun bellowed from the frigate; but this time the aim was not so good or—which was more probable—the distance was getting too great for accuracy of aim with the smooth bores of that day, when rifled guns and modern gunnery were unknown.

At all events, the shot flew between the masts of the schooner, and only cut a hole in her huge mainsail, that made no serious diminution of her speed.

The American continued to pass on her way, with such obvious superiority of speed, in the light trade-wind then prevailing, that Captain Dacres saw that he would have but little chance to catch her, if he did not cripple her at once. He called to Little Needles:

"Mr. Rous, Mr. Rous, come here."

Little Needles was by his side in a moment, and the commander continued to him hurriedly:

"Go below at once, sir, and tell Mr. Sharpe

to fire the whole starboard broadside as soon as he can get it pointed, but not to throw away a shot. I wouldn't have that fellow escape me, to-day, for a thousand pounds."

Away skimmed Little Needles, and, within a minute afterward, the booming of guns from below became incessant, as Mr. Sharpe ran from one to the other, as soon as he could get it pointed, and fired it with his own hand. Shot after shot went skimming over the surface of the sea; threw up the spray all round the schooner; but, such was the hurry of the lieutenant, seeing that the American was fast getting out of gunshot, that, of all the shots fired, only one more hit the frigate's mark, and that one sent a shower of splinters from the forecastle of the schooner and caused the English captain to murmur softly to himself:

"Good shot, mighty good shot."

But, good or bad, the effect of the whole broadside was not sufficient to stop the schooner, which continued her course in triumph, and Dacres saw plainly that, before he could get his other broadside to bear, the stranger would be out of even long range. The effect of the last guns that had been fired showed that the aim was no longer to be relied on.

Very reluctantly he gave orders to dismiss the men from quarters, and was about turning the course of the ship once more to the southwest, to the West Indies, when, as he watched the schooner, he saw a white cloud of smoke rush out from her side. In another minute the deep boom of a gun, larger than any on his own frigate, was followed by the passage of a round shot, that came skimming over the waves, and struck the frigate square in the head, raking her deck diagonally from the starboard bow to the port quarter, and killing no less than eight men in its passage.

The face of Captain Charles Augustus Dacres, when he heard that shot and found that it had actually hit his ship, was a study. For a moment it seemed as if he could not believe his eyes and ears. Then, when he realized that the impudent little Yankee had actually begun to talk back to one of "his majesty's frigates," his rage at the audacity overcame his surprise at the effect of the missile. Captain Dacres grew "as mad as a hatter," and, for the first time in many a long year, ripped out his little oath, in full hearing of the whole crew, as he stamped his foot and ejaculated:

"Why, dammit, dammit, dammit, who ever, who ever heard of such impudence in all his life! I'll follow that insolent little scamp, if it takes me to the coast of Africa. Hands by the braces! Sharp up, boys! Brace up! Hard down with the helm! Lay her as close to the wind as she will go!"

All this with stamping of feet, and a look of such intense anger on his face, that Little Needles told his mates, down in the cockpit, that he "was sure the skipper was foaming at the mouth; only he was too proud to show it."

The Guerriere, in obedience to the orders of her irate commander, altered her course, to coincide with that of the schooner; and, in so doing, opened her batteries again, firing broadside after broadside, as she yawed from side to side, in the hope of sinking the audacious little hooker with a chance shot.

But what was the mortification of the skipper to find that all his cannon-balls fell short; while, after an interval of about five minutes, the schooner fired another shot that came aboard the Guerriere with a force that showed it to be by no means spent, and caused Mr. Sharpe to tell the captain, in private:

"I don't like to interfere, sir; but, if I may state my opinion, I should say that there is neither glory nor profit to be got from the pursuit of that schooner. That shot came from a long thirty-two, and we have no more chance to catch that vessel, without a serious loss than we have of sailing to the moon."

Captain Dacres listened to his first officer, because he always had a great deal of respect for Sharpe.

"I know that as well as you do, Sharpe," he answered in a low tone; "but it wouldn't do to go to the West Indies with a loss of men out of my ship's company, and be obliged to account for it by saying that a little schooner did it, and that I couldn't reach her with my guns. The Admiralty wouldn't believe me. I shall have to follow that schooner, if it is only to clear myself from a court-martial. I wish I saw any signs of heavy weather. We could run her down easily, if we had wind enough; but in these light trades we are nowhere beside her."

Sharpe hemmed, respectfully.

"I think, Captain Dacres, that we have no need to follow her for any purpose of capture; for it is certain that, in this wind, she is sailing about three feet to our two and a half. If her commander has any desire to escape, he can do so, to-night, if not before, and he will be out of sight before we can tell where he has gone."

Dacres ground his teeth as he looked at the little schooner, now sailing so rapidly as to show Sharpe's prediction a true one. She had the heels of the frigate in that light wind, and it was useless to try and catch her.

"Dammit, dammit," he said angrily, "it is enough to make a saint swear, Sharpe. These

Yankees are such a lot of low, cowardly beggars! Fancy her going at a man like that, with a gun so long that she can stay out of danger, and pound this noble old ship to pieces, without giving us a chance to reply. I wish we could meet one of their frigates face to face at last, where there shall be none of this cowardly work, at such long range that a man can hardly see his foe. But there will never be a chance of that sort for us, Sharpe. You remember how that frigate of theirs ran from us, the other day, when we would have given her as fair a chance as ever a ship had. They are very good at running. I will admit; but for a good, stand-up fight, give me old English blood and brawn."

And Captain Dacres shook his fist vindictively at the distant schooner, when he was surprised to see that she was actually shortening sail, and appeared to be waiting for the frigate to come up.

"By heavens, Sharpe," said the captain, "the fellow is taking in his gaff-topsails. What can he mean?"

Sharpe looked uneasily at the strange schooner, to answer:

"I'm afraid, sir, that he is going to give us a great deal of trouble before we have done with him. My advice is to haul round on our original course, and pursue it to Jamaica. As I said before, we can gain no glory from any encounter with this schooner, and we are certain to experience greater loss from her long gun, in this light wind, than we can return with our own battery till we get alongside."

The British captain looked at the schooner with an earnestness that told that he was pondering the advice of his subordinate.

"Dammit, Sharpe," he said, reflectively, "I don't like to give it up so. If he keeps on as he is doing, he will injure us so that we shall have to go into port to refit, and yet I cannot make up my mind to leave him. That schooner might make a splendid tender to the frigate, if we could take her, and we are getting to the time of year when a storm might break on us any day. On the whole I think I will follow the schooner for awhile, in the hope of coming on a gale that will give us a chance to get even with her for her impudence. Keep the ship on her present course, and try not to give him a chance to give us any more of his long shots."

So saying, the captain of the Guerriere turned his back on his officers, and went below to his cabin, to escape from the looks of the more prudent Sharpe, who had been in the service, as a boy, in the Serapis, when she had struck to the Bonhomme Richard under the famous Paul Jones, thirty-four years before. Sharpe was one of the few men in the British navy that could remember how the Americans had fought at that contest, and was disposed to be overcautious in consequence; while Dacres, whose naval education had been received in the school of Nelson and Collingwood, had become so much accustomed to easy victory over French and Spanish, that he had forgotten that Americans came of the same fighting race as his own, and that the elements of anger, emulation, and a sense of rankling humiliation and injustice, had come into the war, then raging, to imbitter the Trans-Atlantic cousins of John Bull to an extent that the English had no idea of. It was these feelings that made the American seamen, during the war of 1812-14, fight with a desperation no race can display like that of the Norse-Saxon, at sea, in a square stand-up battle. So it happened that the Guerriere, under the control of a man who was too proud to acknowledge that he was overmatched, though he knew it in his heart, followed after the schooner all the rest of that summer afternoon, trying in vain to overtake the swift little craft, and, by the time the sun had sloped down to the west, found that the other vessel had gotten below the edge of the earth again.

Sailing as they were to the southeast, with all canvas set, the progress of the two vessels had been very rapid, and the night found them both at the southern edge of the trade-wind belt, coming to the regions where calms and violent tempests alternate, at different periods of the year.

The first indication of this fact was, when the sun, which had been uncovered during the day, went down in a dense bank of dark purple vapor, that had a black base on the seaward side, and that increased so fast after the coming of night, that the officer of the watch took in the stunsails without orders, and sent down word to the captain that a storm was approaching, and that the weather looked as if it was going to turn into a hurricane.

The intelligence brought the chief on deck in short order, for Captain Dacres, with all his pride of lineage and affection, was a careful commander, and anxious for the safety of his ship.

As soon as he had taken one look at the angry aspect of the heavens, he said to the officer of the watch:

"Call all hands to shorten sail, sir. We are going to have a hurricane, and no mistake about it."

The shrill pipe of the boatswain echoed through the ship, and the men came tumbling up the hatchways in a great hurry. For the

next five minutes the vessel was a scene of apparent confusion, but real order, that speedily evolved out of the chaos a decided change in the external appearance of the ship.

The lofty spars, that had, a moment before, been covered with swelling canvas, were bared, and the naked outline of the topmasts and upper yards showed the Guerriere stripped for the fight that was imminent with the elements.

Then, down came the royal and topgallant yards, followed by the topgallant masts themselves, with a celerity that proved none too great for the safety of the ship. By the time she had been reduced to her close-reefed fore and main topsails, with a staysail and spanker, down came a gust of wind that threw the noble vessel very nearly on her beam-ends; the black cloud that had gathered in the west spread over the face of the heavens with a rapidity that gave the eye no time to mark its progress; and the frigate payed off, under the influence of her head-sails, and was driven through the waves that began to rise with great suddenness, at the rate of at least twelve knots an hour.

From that time forth, all thought of the Yankee schooner was lost in that of the danger surrounding the ship, and the Guerriere drove through the darkness all the rest of the night without knowing in what direction the tempest was taking her, till the dawning of next day, when the first sound that Captain Dacres heard, when he came on deck, was the call of the lookout at the mast-head:

"*Port the helm! Port! Schooner close aboard!*"

There was an instant rush of the sailors, in spite of all discipline, to the lee-rail to look overboard, as the naked spars of a vessel made their appearance just over the starboard cat-head, and the ship went driving past the very schooner she had chased the day before, lying in the trough of the sea with all her sail furled, except a little rag of canvas on the mainmast, under which she was riding, as it seemed, to an anchor in the midst of the broad Atlantic Ocean!

By the merest chance in the world, the frigate had seen her in time to escape running over her as she lay there, and, as the great ship swept past the little one, the captain exclaimed:

"By heavens, Sharpe, that was a close shave; wasn't it?"

CHAPTER III.

THE SAUCY JANE.

SHARPE made no answer for a moment, during which he was inspecting the schooner very curiously. At last he said, in a thoughtful way:

"Captain Dacres, that fellow is a good seaman, whatever else he may be. Did you see how he was riding to the gale as we passed?"

"No; how?"

"He was riding at anchor, with no bottom found; but, for all that, he was as steady as a church. I know how it can be done, but there is not one sailor in a thousand who has ever had occasion to use the method. He has let go all his cable, and is riding to a drag, so that he does not make so much leeway as we should do if we were to heave the ship to; yet he does not get so many seas aboard. When the gale clears off, we shall be a long way to leeward of that schooner."

Dacres looked through the driving mists of the gale in the early morning, and saw that the schooner was going out of sight so fast there would be no chance of ever catching her, if he let slip this one. He called all hands again and prepared to heave the frigate to the wind, she having hitherto been driving before it, not caring whither she went. To heave-to a large ship in a storm when she has been scudding, is, as all seamen know, a delicate and dangerous task; but, with the strong crew of a frigate, the difficulties vanish and the evolution occupies but a short time.

Without troubling the non-nautical reader with the details of the operation, suffice it to say that the frigate was hove-to quite successfully, and that within a half-hour she was riding with her head to the wind, the schooner in plain sight, not a mile away from her bows; but all the time steadily increasing her distance, on account of the unequal drifting powers of the two vessels.

Dacres saw this, and very soon ordered an imitation of the stratagem by which the schooner seemed to be lying at anchor in the midst of the ocean, when he well knew that she was out of soundings.

First a cable was got out of the bows, and brought in-board; when the end of it was attached to a drag, made of a spare topgallant-yard and the sail that belonged to it, the two forming an open bag, extended by the aid of the yard till it formed a perfect drag on the leeway of the frigate, and made as much opposition as an anchor itself would have done.

The effect of the maneuver was very quickly apparent; for the schooner ceased to increase her distance and even drifted nearer in the course of the day, as the violence of the gale, instead of slackening, rather grew worse. The light grew stronger and stronger as the day wore on, and at last came the time that the schooner was so close to the frigate in this helpless drifting that the men out on the two vessels

could see each other plainly, and the sailors of the Guerriere saw on the bows of the stranger the figure of a woman, not a warrior, like their figure-head, but a lady in modern dress—a riding-habit—with a whip in her hand, with which she pointed to the motto "SAUCY JANE."

The face of the female figure was so plainly a portrait, that it attracted the attention of even the sailors on board the Guerriere; and Little Needles, among others, remarked to a crony of his:

"Oh, Jack, how she makes my heart beat! Don't you know who that is, my boy?"

"No, nor you neither," was the reply Jack Somers, whose real title was Lord John Somers, he being the younger son of a duke. "It isn't a portrait at all, stupid. It's a fancy thing, made out of a fellow's head. That woman never lived, Tommy."

Tommy Rous smiled with that air of superior wisdom that had given him the sobriquet of Little Needles, as he retorted:

"You're only on your first voyage, Jack; and you forget that I have been on the station before. I tell you that woman is a *portrait*, and I've danced with the original, many and many a time. That's Lady Jane Blair, the daughter of old Gowrie, the Governor of Jamaica, and I'm sure of it, as if she stood here on this deck."

Jack uttered an incredulous whistle, as he echoed the words:

"Lady Jane Blair! That is a likely story, Master Tom. Go and tell it to the marines; for sailors won't believe it."

Tommy Rous gave a sniff of inexpressible contempt.

"Sailors, did you say? Who is the sailor, Jack? Not *you*, surely. They don't call a middy, on his first voyage, a sailor. I tell you that is Lady Jane Blair, and I'll swear to it."

"But how should an English lady come to be on the figure-head of a Yankee schooner?" asked Jack, evidently weakening.

Little Needles waved his hand in a lofty manner.

"I don't know *how* it came there" he said; "but this I *will* swear, that the figure-head of that schooner was meant for Lady Jane Blair, daughter of the Governor of Jamaica, and that is why the little thing is called 'Saucy Jane.' She was a saucy one, as ever you saw; and when I say that, remember that you are talking to a man of considerable experience among the fair sex."

And Little Needles winked one eye, with the gravity of a man who knew what he was talking about, as well as the next one.

The captain of the Guerriere also said to his first officer as he paced his quarter deck, in full sight of the little schooner:

"Sharpe, dammit, it is very strange; but it seems to me that I know the face on that figure-head, and that I have seen the woman somewhere. Who the deuce can it be!"

Sharpe, being an old bachelor, and therefore not well acquainted with the ways of women, only shook his head, and answered vaguely:

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

The captain beckoned to Hughes, and asked him:

"Mr. Hughes, do you recognize the face of the lady on that figure-head? I'm sure I've seen it somewhere, and I cannot, for the life of me, remember where it was."

Now Hughes, besides being a Welshman, was also something of a dandy in his dress, and quite a lady's man on shore.

He instantly answered:

"I think I know the face, sir, as that of Lady Jane Blair, the daughter of the Governor of Jamaica."

Dacres started as if some one had stuck a pin in him, as he cried:

"What? Dammit, what's that? Lady Jane Blair? Why, who the devil gave the insolent Yankee liberty to take the name of an English earl's daughter in vain, like that?"

Mr. Hughes shrugged his shoulders in respectful ignorance as he said:

"That I do not know, sir; but I have danced so often with Lady Jane, at the Governor's balls, that I should know her face among a thousand others. I don't know but what there might be one explanation of the matter, if you would like to hear a theory, sir."

Dacres nodded to the other to go on, and Hughes continued:

"What I know is very little; but I was at Jamaica, two years ago, in the *Boadicea*, and there was a great scandal, at the time, about a Yankee, that had the same name as the earl's family—Blair—and had palmed himself off upon the West Indians as a man from the same place as Lord Gowrie. I know the people said, at the time, that the Yankee had been making love to Lady Jane, and that, when the earl found out who he really was, he kicked him out—"

"And very properly, too!" interjected Dacres, turning his head toward the schooner, as well as he could for the wind, that nearly blew his hat off, even while he held on to it with both hands. "He ought to have had him arrested and whipped at the cart-tail, for an impostor. Go on, Hughes."

"That is nearly all I know, sir. I presume that this schooner is owned by this man, Blair, and that, since he cannot get the real Lady Jane, he has made up his mind to do the next best thing, and give her name to his schooner."

"But what a liberty to take!" ejaculated Dacres. "To put the portrait of a lady of quality on his confounded bows, and to call the hooker the *Saucy Jane*! Confound his impudence!"

Hughes smiled in a respectful and deprecating manner.

"As far as that goes, Captain Dacres, I must admit that the name is not so inappropriate. Did you never meet her ladyship?"

Dacres shook his head.

"No, I think not. Let me see, the Earl of Gowrie is a Scotch lord, isn't he? Yes, to be sure. No, I never met his daughter."

"Well, sir, she was always one of the sauciest of little ladies, and got the nickname of 'Saucy Jane' among the ladies of the island. It was common for them to talk of her as such. So I suppose that this Yankee has caught at the nickname, and given it to his schooner, in order to spite the earl, in case he heard of it."

The face of Dacres grew dark as he listened, although it was none of his business, and there was no immediate prospect that he would ever be in a position to do anything to the schooner.

The storm had been raging with greater fury than ever for some time, and it was as much as any one could do to face the wind at all, to look at the other vessel. Even the lookout had been called down from aloft since the light had increased, and was stationed at the knight-heads; where he was the only man in the ship whose duty compelled him to look to windward. The rest of the watch crouched under the bulwarks, their faces muffled up in their high collars, listening to the howling of the winds, and thanking their stars that they were out of reach of any rocks.

The captain had held his conversation under the shelter of the poop, and he could see that the schooner was slowly drifting past the frigate, all the time, whether from the fact that her drag was smaller, or from her greater comparative surface as proportioned to the size of the vessel or not.

"Sharpe," he said, in a low voice, to the silent first luff, who had taken no part in Hughes's little dish of scandal, "I think that, if we were to let go our drag a little, we might manage to run down this Yankee schooner, and prevent her from flaunting her impudence before us any more."

Sharpe compressed his lips as he answered:

"I suppose we might, sir; but I should be very reluctant to do it, without a positive order."

"Why—why, dammit, why?" asked the captain testily.

"Because, sir," was the grave answer of the old lieutenant, "it would be a very cruel and useless *murder* of all hands on board; and we should run a risk of doing ourselves a great deal of damage."

Dacres looked at the schooner with a vindictiveness that showed his anger was fully aroused, and rapped out his favorite oath:

"Dammit, Sharpe, we have got to do such things in war, and *everything* is fair. Call the watch to let the ship drag astern, till the time comes to cut away. We can't fire a gun in this weather, but we can do what is as bad. We can sink that schooner, and I am going to try our hand at it."

Then the irate captain took command himself, an unusual thing when Sharpe was on deck, and ordered the ship to be hauled short on her cable toward the drag, till he saw that the schooner was dead to leeward. Then he gave the order to get axes, and finally to cut away the cable, when the great ship went drifting down, with the speed of a free body, on the anchored schooner, as she rode to her drag, in the storm.

It was a dangerous thing for the ship, while sure destruction for the schooner if the frigate drifted aboard. The distance between the two vessels was not above three cable-lengths, when the hawser was cut, and the Guerriere went surging down on the *Saucy Jane*.

That a good lookout was kept on the little privateer was evident; for the frigate had hardly started on her mad career, when there was a shout from the imperiled schooner, and the crew made their appearance, and began to haul like madmen on a side guy, connected with their cable, that no one had noticed till then, with which they began to draw the schooner to one side of the drag, so as to escape the shock of the ship that was threatening to overwhelm her.

The whole affair did not, from the nature of things, occupy more than three minutes. It was a question of whether the schooner would get out of the way in time or not; and luck was with her that day.

The frigate, in cutting loose from all control, was obliged to go where the wind and sea chose to take her. The schooner had control over her own movements, to the extent of being able to haul out of the line of drift, about six or seven feet. The allowance was too small to enable

the Saucy Jane to escape entirely; but the frigate, while it struck her, did so only obliquely, and then drifted past her, astern, leaving the evidence of her visit behind her in ruin. The quarter of the Guerriere scraped all along the side of the Saucy Jane, and the bowsprit of the latter had caught in the mizzen chains of the frigate, where the jib-boom and bowsprit mashed up into a mass of confusion, and the stays, hooking into the anchors of the Guerriere, as she drifted clear, held the smaller vessel to the larger one, with a tenacity that sent Dacres rushing forward, shouting:

"All hands forward! Clap on and keep hold of the schooner. We've got her, boys, we've got her!"

The men, full of enthusiasm, rushed forward to grab at the great stays that were training over the frigate's anchor-stock, and succeeded in getting a turn of the ropes around the capstan.

Then came one anxious moment for the men of the American privateer, as the schooner had to support, on the stays that were attached to her fore and fore-topmasts, the immense strain of the huge frigate, as well as the ordinary strain of the tempest. Human workmanship could not stand it long, therefore the suspense did not last more than twenty seconds.

Then came a crashing, as the foremast of the schooner gave way under the strain, and the whole fabric was torn out of the smaller vessel, and carried down to leeward with the frigate.

If the mast had not given way when it did, it is probable that the frigate would have dragged the Saucy Jane under water. As it was, the little vessel was covered with the seas that poured over her, while the strain of the frigate was on her, and she was whirled round, with her stern to the waves, for so long, that the sailors of the Guerriere, watching, thought that she was certainly gone.

When at last the big ship drifted clear, the schooner was left a wreck on the face of the ocean, with the seas pouring over her so as to bury her at every plunge.

But the Guerriere, unable to stop herself, now that she had given up control of her movements, went drifting down the wind, with a velocity that threatened to become dangerous, till she at last brought up under the effect of a new drag, and rode the rest of the day out, in sight of the schooner, about three miles below her.

Many were the congratulations of the captain by his officers at the clever way in which he had managed to outwit the Yankee, by running him down in the storm, in a position where he could not use his long gun.

Till long after dark the sailors of the Guerriere were trying to make out the outline of the schooner, which they could see as long as it was light, in the trough of the sea, laboring heavily, and apparently about to sink at every plunge.

The night wore on, and the first look, in the morning, after the usual squint to windward, was at the place to which their eyes had been last directed the night before, when they were watching for the outline of the bare mainmast of the wrecked schooner.

The gale was breaking, as the first glance showed; but the next told them that the master of the privateer, whoever he was, must have passed a very active night. The schooner, which had been a wreck when they last saw her had been refitted, and stood up against the light of the morning as trim as ever, with her fore and mainmasts both up again, the rigging all in its place, and every appearance of being able to stand another storm without any difficulty.

Dacres was the first of all his own officers to come on deck, and as he noted the condition of affairs a deep scowl crossed his brow, and he muttered to himself:

"Dammit, dammit, dammit! It is enough to make any man swear, to see the way the fellow has got on. But I'll take him, if I have to follow him to the coast of Africa and back!"

As the light strengthened, the schooner was observed to be slowly extending the area of canvas she could expose to the winds, and the Guerriere followed her example to such effect that, by the time the gale had sunk, in the course of the morning, to a strong wind from the northwest, the frigate was hard at work beating up after the Saucy Jane, which had been brought to windward at the end of the storm, about three miles and a half, before the frigate could get to follow her.

And now followed the first chase, with anything like the elements of equality in it, that had yet taken place between the two vessels.

The frigate was astern and to leeward—a point against her—but the wind was blowing so stiffly, and the sea was so high, that the schooner labored far more than the large ship, and her only point of real advantage lay in the acuteness of the angle which she was able to present to the wind, as compared to her antagonist.

The Guerriere, by the time the boatswain piped to dinner, had closed the gap to less than a mile, and only the rolling of the ship prevented the captain from using his guns to stop the further progress of the Saucy Jane.

By the middle of the afternoon, the ship was within easy gunshot; and the schooner was observed to be throwing overboard a lot of stuff, of one kind and another, to lighten her and enable her to escape.

By sunset the sea had begun to go down and, the wind remaining fair for the frigate, the expectation of everybody on board was that the schooner would be run down in the night, if the darkness did not give her a chance to evade the Guerriere.

Accordingly the lookout was stationed at the knight-heads, and two more men, with the sharpest eyes in the ship, were detailed to watch the schooner, with orders never to let her out of their sight.

Then away through the darkness went pursuers and pursued, till the rising of the moon, which took place about half-past ten in the evening, showed them the schooner, the same distance she had been at sunset, with the sea gone down so far that gunnery seemed quite possible; the wind falling fast. Evidently the Saucy Jane would resume her superiority in light winds and be out of gun-shot ere the dawning of the next day, if something were not done to stop her forthwith.

Such was the position of affairs, when Captain Dacres ordered the men to quarters, and fired at the schooner from his long eighteens, by the deceptive light of the moon.

The shot from the frigate went skipping over the waves, and they could see it as it passed the schooner very nearly striking her stern, close to the rudder.

"A miss is as good as a mile," quoth Little Needles dryly, as he noted the effect of the shot. "Boys, we shall never take that schooner, and you mark my words."

The distance between the two ships was about half a mile when the fire was opened; but the deceptive light of the moon or the defective gunnery of the crew of the Guerriere was such that, after more than a dozen shots had been fired, the captain, in disgust, told the first officer to order the guns secured again. The firing was too obviously thrown away to justify its continuance.

The master of the privateer was evidently of the same opinion as Dacres: for he never offered to fire back at the frigate, confining his efforts to increasing his speed by all the means known to good seamanship. Having still the advantage of the weather-gage, the smaller vessel was able to sail away from the large one as soon as the force of the wind decreased sufficiently for the schooner to spread all her canvas to its influence.

As the moon rose higher and higher in the heavens, the watchers on the Guerriere could see that the chase was slowly but surely getting further away; and when the morning dawned, the schooner had put six or eight miles between herself and the frigate. Still Dacres stuck obstinately to his chase, and in the course of the morning, the wind freshened so much that he made up three miles out of the six that had divided him from the privateer. By noon the distance had been lessened still more, and when the crew of the Guerriere went to dinner, there was not a man in the ship that did not think they were going to catch the Saucy Jane at last.

Captain Dacres was at his dinner, when the master came down to report that he had made the latitude at 41.41, north of the Equator; with the longitude 55.48 west from Greenwich, and that a sail was in sight from the mast-head, to windward of the frigate, with all the appearance of a ship-of-war.

Dacres jumped up from the table in a state of great excitement at the news, and hurried on deck.

CHAPTER IV. OLD IRONSIDES.

It was then about two in the afternoon; and the schooner that they had been chasing was between the Guerriere and the strange sail. The latter was still so far off that it was difficult to make out anything of her character, beyond the fact that she was a ship, with a great deal of canvas set, coming down with the wind on her quarter, straight toward the Guerriere.

The little privateer was already trying to get out of the space between the two ships, as if she feared, in the new-comer, another enemy. She had set all the canvas a schooner ever carries in the lightest of winds, and was careening over to the seas, with her lee-rail under water all the way, standing to the north, in the hope the Guerriere might find herself so much engrossed with the new sail, she might neglect the small vessel she had followed so long and persistently.

As soon as Dacres saw the strange sail, with the weather-gage of the Guerriere, he took his spy-glass and went up the mizzen-rigging, without a word to any one, murmuring to himself:

"Now, if that is only the ship I think she is, we shall have fun."

Arrived at the mast-head, he took a long, thirsty look at the stranger through the glass, and came down to the deck, with a face of great glee, that broke out in his voice, as he said to Sharpe:

"Clear the ship for action, Mr. Sharpe. That ship yonder is the same that we chased with the squadron under Brooke, only a month ago. I thought we should catch her at last. She was a good runner; now let's see what she can do in the fighting line."

The news that the ship in sight was "a Yankee" spread through the Guerriere so fast that, before the first notes of the drum had settled into the long roll, the men were rushing to quarters, and the officers could not restrain them from uttering cheers, which were so far from displeasing the captain, that he said to Sharpe, when the first lieutenant apologized for the unusual noise:

"Never mind, sir; never mind. I like to hear them. It shows the men like the job on hand, and that is half the battle."

Then, as he was walking the deck, rubbing his hands:

"Why, dammit, Sharpe, that is just the ship I was looking for—the Yankee frigate Constitution, that we chased so hard off the very gates of New York the other day. It will be worth a step to you, old fellow, if we can take her into Halifax. She is bigger than we are, I believe; but that will make the glory all the greater! I wouldn't have lost this chance for all the schooners you could shake a stick at."

Sharpe made no answer, for it was not his place to do so; but as he turned away about his duties, there was a look on his face that was by no means as confident as that on the captain's countenance, and he very soon after went below, under a slight pretext, and hastily directed and sealed a small parcel, marked:

"To My Sister,
"MRS. JAMES STOPFORD,
"BOLTON PRIORY,
"SUSSEX."

"(To be delivered in the event of my death.)"

When he had done this, he came on deck, and resumed his work with the air of a resolute and brave man, who has made up his mind to die in the performance of his duty.

The appearance of the Guerriere was vastly different from what it had been in the morning during the chase of the schooner.

She had been crowded with sail from truck to deck; but as soon as the strange sail was found out by the commander to be the enemy, there came a change.

Captain Dacres, being an able seaman, and knowing well that the ship now approaching was heavier than his own, might have tried to escape had he chosen, but nothing was further from his intentions.

He had, in common with all the British captains of the day, after the glorious victories of Nelson over far superior forces of foreign ships, an idea that the English nation was invincible at sea, and no odds too great to be overcome by English sailors.

He had ordered all his light sails sent down on deck, and the ship was snug under her topsails, two reefs in each; foresail and spanker set; the main course banging in the brails. Under this canvas she was standing toward the strange ship, close-hauled, sailing so slowly that the schooner had no difficulty in making her way out of all further danger from the frigate to leeward, whatever might be the case with that to windward.

At about three in the afternoon, the stranger was made out, by all on deck, with the naked eye, as a frigate, under a cloud of canvas, coming down with the wind full on her starboard quarter.

Her stunsails were set, aloft and aloft, with every rag of canvas that would draw. They saw her pass within a very short distance of the schooner, which seemed to have got over the fright of her crew at the coming of the stranger, and, from what transpired, it was probable that the two spoke each other.

The interview over, the large ship hauled her wind and tacked to the westward, so as to show herself fully to the Guerriere, ere she began the task of stripping for action in her turn.

She was about a league from the British ship, when this occurred, and the crew of the Guerriere had a full view of her, as she hauled down sail after sail, and assumed the same light canvas as that of her opponent.

She looked a very fine ship, and was considerably larger than the Guerriere, besides carrying more guns, of heavier caliber.

Nevertheless, such was the confidence of the English sailors in the invincibility of their nation at sea, that the sight gave no one on board a moment's uneasiness, except Sharpe; and he kept his feelings to himself and did not permit them to show on his face.

As soon as the strange ship had stripped for action she kept on her original course with the wind on her quarter, running down to the English ship, at the rate of about four knots an hour.

Dacres, as soon as he saw the enemy within about three miles, threw his maintopsail to the mast, as if he defied the ship of his foe to come down and fight him.

The preliminaries of the fight occupied a great deal of time, for the American frigate made

all her preparations with the utmost deliberation. When the Guerriere had been stripped an hour or more, the Constitution began to send down her royal yards and reef her topsails, and it was not till five o'clock in the long afternoon of that 19th of August, 1812, that the two ships made the formal announcement to each other that they were enemies, by hoisting their ensigns.

The Guerriere was the first to show her colors, when, at five o'clock, she sent up three English ensigns to her mast-heads, with the remark from Dacres, as he ordered them spread:

"He shall not say he did not know who we were, Sharpe. Give him all the spare bunting on board the old barge. I'm not ashamed of her. Now it is about time that we paid Mr. Yankee the compliments of his majesty's ship Guerriere."

The English captain, as he said these words, advanced to the edge of the poop, whence he could be heard from all parts of the upper decks, as the vessel was then lying with her sails aback, and called out, at the full stretch of his lungs and trumpet:

"Men, I've got a word to say to you. We are going into action with the ship you see yonder. She is a Yankee frigate, heavier than we are; but British sailors never flinch from the odds of a few guns, more or less. The Yankees are a set of renegade Englishmen, who were too selfish to pay the taxes the king levied on them; so they rebelled. Well, we didn't care for keeping a lot of cantankerous rebels, so we let them go; and ever since they've been trying to make up their minds to fight us fairly. Now the time has come they are going to get all they want, and all I've got to ask you is, to fight in the style of Trafalgar and the Nile, and we will take the Yankee frigate into Halifax, and get a pocketful of prize-money. Now, men, give three cheers for the king and let the scoundrels have it, HOT!"

This speech was followed, as Dacres had intended it to be, by an uproarious burst of cheering, in the midst of which the guns of the Guerriere exploded, and the action began at the distance of nearly a mile.

The captain of the Guerriere, with the caution of a good sailor, put his ship under way as soon as he began to fight. He filled his maintopsail as he started his fire, and stood toward the Constitution, close-hauled, every now and then wearing his vessel to avoid being raked or to get a raking fire on the enemy, who was coming down on him bows foremost, and therefore liable to be raked by every shot that struck her in the bows.

Dacres himself stood on the poop, with his glass at his eye, as long as there was any necessity for its use, and then peered through the smoke as it drove across the vessel, and saw that the American frigate was approaching the Guerriere in almost entire silence, yawning as she came, but firing very few shots.

His own men were behaving in the usual style of sailors, stripped to the waist, their naked bodies gleaming in the light of the gun-deck, the sweat pouring down them at the hard work of loading and sponging. The thunder of the battery was incessant, as the main-deck guns went off in salvos, while the ship trembled at the shocks, and the officers roared hoarse orders from division to division.

Dacres looked at the American ship in wonder. She was coming down in majestic silence, as if the fire of the Guerriere had not injured her a particle; her yards still in the slugs; not a rope out of its place, though her sails were full of holes, and more than one fluttered in ribbons.

As he looked at her she yawned, fired a single shot at the Guerriere, as if to test the range, and Dacres heard the shot strike the ship below him and go crashing through the furniture of the Guerriere, accompanied by a chorus of shrieks and groans that told the damage done.

Then the Constitution came on her course again as grandly as ever; and Dacres, taking it into his head the enemy was afraid to close, and wishing to taunt him into the last desperation of a sea fight, shouted, over the din of the cannonade:

"Sail trimmers away! Man the braces! Up helm, quartermaster! Let go and haul!"

The quartermaster reversed the spokes of the wheel, and the yards were swung. The Guerriere, under the influence of wind and helm combined, swung round and put her head in the same direction as the Constitution, running off to the south-east, as much as to say:

"Come after me, if you dare!"

The advantage of the maneuver became apparent, as the Constitution followed. The Guerriere, with the wind broad on her quarter, a little abaft the middle of the ship, was free from the danger of being raked; while the American frigate, to get alongside, would have to expose herself to risk of being raked with every shot, free to go from stem to stern of the ship, with disastrous results.

The Guerriere had the further advantage, in that the smoke of her guns, tending to blow constantly away from the direction of the American ship, the view of her gunners was not intercepted at any time, while the Constitu-

tion was all the time following her own smoke, and her men were compelled to peer through it at the English ship, in order to take a correct aim.

Under these circumstances the action continued for nearly half an hour longer; the Constitution firing only an occasional gun as it bore; the Guerriere running off, with her batteries blazing away as hard as the men could work them.

The English ship had the heels of the American, and could maintain her position all day if she chose, under the equal sail that both vessels were carrying.

At last Dacres looked at his watch, and said to Sharpe, with a face that showed the joyful excitement of the battle:

"I say, Sharpe, isn't this just fun? Here we are, and the confounded Yankee hasn't dared to fire a shot at us, to amount to anything."

Sharpe shook his head with much gravity, as he replied:

"I am sorry to be compelled to report, sir, that the enemy has done a good deal of harm below decks. Every shot he fires kills us, and the men are beginning to flinch from the guns."

Dacres uttered an incredulous oath, and, without another word, rushed below, to see what the lieutenant meant.

He found the space between decks a perfect shambles; blood lying around in pools; the surgeon at work like a veritable butcher, with his knives and saws; the smell of blood everywhere. He took one look; then ran back on deck, and beheld the American ship, setting her fore and maintopsail, to close with the Guerriere.

Then Dacres began to realize that the foe, whose wrath he had provoked, was one whose powers of offense were greater than his own; and that the doom of defeat was staring him in the face, in spite of the traditions of Nelson, Collingwood, and the long lines of heroes that have made the British navy so famous.

With the dogged obstinacy of an English gentleman who refuses to acknowledge defeat till it can no longer be evaded, the captain looked aloft to his own vessel, and then at the spars of his foe, to gather what consolation he could from a comparison of the damages to the rigging of the two.

His face lighted up, as he saw that Guerriere had suffered very little aloft; while the sails of the Constitution were all in holes, the ropes of her upper spars hanging in sad confusion around the masts.

"Damnit all; I may win yet," he muttered. "I'll stick to her anyhow, and try boarding, if she gives me a chance."

Looking back to the Constitution, he saw that she was gaining slowly on his own ship under her increase of sail, but no longer firing a single shot.

The silence encouraged him. It gave his own ship a chance, of which the sailors of the Guerriere were not slow to avail themselves.

They fired as fast as they could, and had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy suffering severely, without a chance to return a shot till she got alongside.

Dacres paced his poop impatiently, watching the slow advance of the American ship.

It seemed, to his excited imagination, that he had never known his own men to fire as badly as they did that day. He could see too many shots go skipping over the waves without striking the enemy at all, and was just sending down word to the officers of divisions to be more careful, when he saw the Yankee frigate within three cable-lengths of his weather-quarter, and knew that, in another minute, the Guerriere would be under her full broadside.

CHAPTER V.

TEN MINUTES' WORK.

SLOWLY, but surely, the bows of the Constitution began to double on the quarter of the British frigate, and both ships, wrapped in smoke, passed each other.

Then, for the first time on that August day, did Dacres begin to find out what sort of a foe he had provoked.

The Constitution passed the Guerriere, delivering her first broadside, in a perfect blaze of flame, her guns pealing like the constant roll of thunder; and Dacres heard the crashing of timbers all round him, till it seemed the heavens were raining spars and splinters. The shrieks of men below, as the missiles of that terrible broadside swept through the space of the gun-deck and bore death in their passage, were awful to hear, and, in the midst of the din, the grand form of "Old Ironsides" passed slowly from stern to stem of the ill-fated Guerriere, overhauling her, from the greater speed at which she was going, and then luffing up into the wind, to cross her bow and rake her.

As the American ship passed ahead, the mizzenmast of the Guerriere fell, shot away at the deck; but as the Constitution luffed, she missed stays and drifted athwart the bows of the British ship.

The bowsprit of the Guerriere passed over the quarter of the Constitution, and the cabin of the American ship caught fire from the explosion of the forward guns of the British frigate.

Dacres with the spirit of a brave man who takes hold of every chance in the most confused fight, by keeping his eyes and ears open, seeing the confusion caused by this fire, called out as loud as he could shout:

"BOARDERS AWAY! ALL HANDS ON DECK!"

The men came tumbling up on deck, with their bare, smoke-begrimed bodies and gleaming cutlasses, shouting in true British style, as they rushed forward to board the Constitution.

The cabin windows of the American frigate were ablaze, and the American sailors were so busy extinguishing the fire that they did not at first heed the cry.

But it was not doomed that the British should ever set their feet on the decks of Old Ironsides, except as prisoners, and just as the captain of the Guerriere had climbed the rail of his own ship, the shout was heard on the Constitution:

"BOARDERS AWAY!"

Then came a rush of men, as the Yankee sailors came crowding to the stern of their ship, disregarding the sanctity of the quarter-deck, and jumped on the bulwarks with wild yells, shaking their cutlasses, evidently as ready to board as the English.

There was, indeed, in the expression of their faces, a savage desperation that showed how their feelings had been worked up, and from which the British sailors, brave as they were, instinctively recoiled. The marines of the Guerriere began to fire their volleys, and the cracking of boarding pistols became so rapid and incessant that the men of both ships left the guns to attend to the more desperate work on hand.

The American officers were seen on the rail of the Constitution, ready to spring, when the fire grew so hot that more than one dropped back dead in the first minute of the short contest.

Then came a surging wave that separated the two ships, and the hope of boarding was over for both parties.

The Constitution forged ahead as the wind caught her headsails, and the Guerriere's main-mast followed her mizzen, as the ships separated, dragging with it, in its fall, the foretop-mast, and leaving the unhappy British frigate a total wreck on the water.

Dacres, as he heard the crash, looked up and saw what had been done.

His ship, so proud but ten minutes before, ere Old Ironsides had ranged up abeam, had been reduced to a dismasted wreck within that ten minutes of relentless destruction. The Yankee frigate, on the other hand, passed out of the fight with all her yards across, and ran off to leeward as if she did not deign any further contest with a foe she had so completely defeated.

Then the Englishmen had an opportunity to look about them and find out what damage had been done.

The Constitution, instead of continuing the contest, had run off to leeward, and appeared to be trying to repair the damages she had received in the battle. They could see her yards covered with men, bending new sails, and repairing the ropes that had been dangling loosely about the royal-masts and lower yards.

For this purpose the ship was hove-to, just out of gun-shot of the dismasted Guerriere, and the operation of refitting was carried on with a rapidity that showed that the Constitution was not going to abandon the prize she had won so easily.

Old Ironsides was coming back again.

Dacres knew it, and the expression of his face grew desperate, as he said to Sharpe:

"The luck is against us at last, Sharpe."

The old lieutenant's only answer was:

"Captain Dacres, it is the fortune of war. We have been beaten by a ship too heavy for us, and there is no disgrace to a brave man in such a fate."

Dacres ground his teeth in the bitterness of his mortification.

"If I could have only shot away one of his masts, we might have had a chance," he groaned; "but as it is, the poor old Guerriere has seen her last fight. Set the flag on the stump of the mizzenmast, Sharpe. It will not be for long now."

It was but an empty defiance; for every one on board the ill-fated ship knew that the moment the American frigate chose to resume the action the Guerriere was at her mercy.

The master came up, a little while after, to report that there was water in the hold, and that the ship had received no less than thirty shot under the water line, below the fifth sheet of her copper.

The men—such as were left—came up on deck, in the absence of orders that no one seemed disposed to give, and looked gloomily at the American frigate, still in plain sight of the disabled ship and evidently nearly ready to resume the contest.

The suspense of the defeated party during the time that Old Ironsides was preparing to return was, if possible, more trying than the actual fight, which had only lasted for ten minutes, after the ships once got fairly abeam.

Dacres paced the deck in savage silence, every now and then casting a glance of inexpressible despair at the flag flying from the stump of his mizzenmast. He looked at his watch incessant-

ly, and cast frequent glances at the sun, as if to ask for the shades of night to cover his shame. It had been six o'clock when he last looked at the timepiece, as he first ran off with the wind on his quarter to invite the close contest that had proved so disastrous to him.

At last he uttered a sigh of angry despair, as the American ship was observed to be wearing round again, now standing toward the Guerriere.

Dacres increased the speed of his walk, while the men on deck cast anxious but sympathizing looks at their proud commander, who was evidently suffering tortures.

He said nothing, and did not attempt to give any orders. Orders would have been in vain at such a time. The Guerriere was a wreck, with seventy-nine men out of her crew killed and wounded, four feet of water in her hold, and not a mast standing.

Her captain had not even tried to clear away the rigging, that still trailed overboard from the prostrate masts and yards. The exertion would have been useless, and every one on board knew it.

It was seven o'clock by Dacres's watch when the Constitution, having repaired her damages, came running down again, as trim as when she first went into the fight, and rounded to under the stern of the Guerriere; her guns trained to rake; her men at quarters with lighted matchcs.

Captain Dacres, with a muffled groan that he instantly repressed, waved his hand to Sharpe, and muttered hastily:

"Take it down. Take it down. No use of more bloodshed. We have done all we could."

The old lieutenant, with the same grave face that he had worn since the fight had first opened, went to the stump of the mizzenmast, where the flag still trailed against the wool, and slowly pulled it down. Then Captain Dacres, with a wave of his hand to his officers, said, in a choking kind of way:

"Gentlemen, the battle is over; go and secure your things."

The officers bowed and left the deck in a body, and the men rushed below to get their bags ready, for they knew that the Guerriere could not live long. Dacres, alone, too proud to accept defeat like the rest, paced the deck like a caged tiger, and cast lowering glances at the Constitution, as she hove-to under his stern, and dropped a boat from her side. It was a bitter moment for him.

The last time he had seen that very frigate, she had been a fugitive from a British squadron, very near the port of New York. The Guerriere had been one of the ships engaged in the "Hunting of Old Ironsides."* Now Old Ironsides was taking her revenge over the first of her hunters, and the first frigate action of the war had been settled.

Dacres felt it the more keenly, that he was the first British captain who had yet met an American ship in fair fight. And he had been obliged to *haul down his flag!*

The boat came dancing over the water; a smart young officer jumped on board the dismasted wreck, and asked the commander, the only person visible on deck:

"Have you struck, sir?"

Dacres answered, with a bitter sneer:

"I do not know that it would be prudent to continue the engagement any longer, sir. Your eyes might tell you that."

The young American officer drew himself up, and answered with cold distinctness:

"I fail to understand you, sir. Am I to understand you have struck?"

The obstinate captain looked at him in the same bitter, sarcastic way, and replied, as he waved his hand over the wreck of his ship:

"Not precisely; but I do not think it worth while to fight any longer. That ought to satisfy you, sir."

"In that case," returned the American sharply, "if you cannot decide, I will return on board my ship, and we can resume the engagement. We are perfectly willing, if you are."

Dacres scowled on him, in the bitterness of his despair, as he replied, with an attempt at a shrug of his shoulders:

"Why, I am pretty much *hors de combat*, already. I have hardly men enough to work a gun, and my ship is in a sinking condition."

The young American drew himself up with a stiffness that told how angry he was getting, as he demanded, in a manner that admitted of no more equivocation:

"I wish to know, sir, whether I am to consider you as an enemy, or as a prisoner of war. I have no time for further parley."

As he spoke, he was moving away to the side of the wreck to get into his boat again, when Dacres, with a smile that gave him the appearance of a man in great pain, said, slowly and grudgingly:

"I believe there is no alternative, sir. If the ship was in a condition to fight any longer, I would give you more trouble, but—but—but—if I could fight any longer, I would do so with

pleasure. But—but—as it is—I—MUST—SURRENDER—MYSELF—A PRISONER OF WAR!"

The words were spoken, and the revenge of Old Ironsides had begun.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE PRIVATEER.

THE night had half spent itself before the prize had been fully taken possession of, and the American prize-crew had all they could attend to, to stop the leaks that threatened to sink the Guerriere, as she lay on the waves, an idle wreck.

The British sailors worked with a will to help their captors, for it was noticeable that, as soon as the battle was over, the animosity engendered by the strife subsided to a great extent, under the influence of a common language. The carpenters were set to work stopping shot-holes, while the men pumped away the water that had accumulated in the hold, with a strength of numbers that made the work light.

By the time the moon rose, which was not till eleven o'clock, the prize-master of the Guerriere reported that the hold was nearly free of water, and that the frigate could probably be brought into port.

Captain Dacres, with the fine breeding of a gentleman of good English family, after the first burst of his chagrin at the moment of his surrender, accepted the invitation of Captain Hull to come on board the Constitution, and share the cabin of the commanding officer.

As the moon rose, the form of the little schooner, that had led the British frigate into destruction, was visible over the quarter of the Constitution; and Dacres, who was on deck at the time, talking to Hull, remarked, with a smile of some bitterness:

"Well, sir, I must confess that you have taken me in as handsome a way as possible; but for all that, if it had not been for that little hooker yonder, you might never have met me. Do you know what she is? Not a vessel of your regular navy, I imagine."

Captain Hull smiled as he said:

"No; not exactly. That schooner has already played a part which does her captain great credit, and, if I mistake not, she is destined to do more before we have heard the last of her. That is the *Saucy Jane*, privateer, and she is commanded by an ex-officer of our navy, who will yet make his mark."

Dacres looked at the trim little schooner, and observed graciously:

"I make no doubt of it, sir. The gentleman is a first-class seaman, from the way in which he handled his vessel under a great deal of difficulty, and I should be delighted to see him and pay him the compliments due to a brave opponent."

"If I mistake not, he has come alongside to hold some communication with me," replied Hull, courteously. "If you please, we will ask him aboard, Captain Dacres."

"By all means," was the reply of Dacres, and just at that moment the ship was haled from the privateer:

"Constitution, ahoy! Can we speak with Captain Hull a minute?"

The commander himself looked over the side, and answered:

"Is that Captain Eaton? Please to come on board. I want to speak to you, sir."

"Very good, sir," came from the deck of the schooner, and a boat was dropped from the side of the small vessel, and came over the swells to the Constitution. A tall young man, with the active figure of an athlete, was seen to climb the side of the ship, and in a few minutes he was standing by Hull, greeting the commander of the frigate with the respect due to a superior.

Hull introduced him to Dacres, who said, in a very gracious tone:

"Sir, you have done what no privateer ever did before. You have aided in the capture of one of his majesty's frigates; for, if I had not met you, I should now be in the West Indies. You handled your schooner splendidly; but there is one question I should like to ask you, now it is all over."

"I will answer it with pleasure," said the officer who had been called Captain Eaton, "if it has only reference to the past. You, of course, understand, Captain Dacres, that the future is another thing altogether."

Dacres laughed, for he had recovered his good-humor under the courteous treatment which he was receiving.

"Of course, I understand that. What I want to know is, how you managed to refit your schooner in the midst of a heavy sea, when I had carried off your masts, and left you in the trough of the sea, a wreck."

"The question is easily answered, Captain Dacres. You thought you took away my masts, but you made a mistake. You carried away my foremast, and that brought down the main-topmast with it; but they dropped off your anchor stock, where they hung, and lay in the sea. Of course the rate of drift of a spar in the water and a vessel, with a surface to expose to the wind, was different. The end of the matter was that we drifted down on the spars, and, being in a very ticklish position at the time, the

men were willing to work all night to save themselves from a British prison. I do not want to be uncomplimentary to your nation, sir; but we have a holy horror of British prisons in America, and my men would do a great deal to escape from the chance of going to one of them. We had a hard time of it rigging the shears in such a sea, but the task was finally accomplished, and you must acknowledge it was well worth the loss of a night's sleep."

Dacres smiled somewhat ruefully as he answered:

"To you, yes; but I may be pardoned for wishing that you had not been so confounded active. Might I ask you one more question?"

"Certainly, with the same limitation, captain?"

"Well, then, sir, I should like to know who it is that your schooner is named after, and whose port ait you have on the figure-head."

"By all means, captain. The portrait is that of the wife of the owner of the schooner, whose Christian name the vessel carries, with the adition 'Saucy.' That is all."

Dacres hesitated. He did not like to ask point-blank who the lady was, but managed to get at it in another way.

"Ah, yes, I beg pardon; but I thought that it resembled a lady, not personally known to me, but to some of my officers. I suppose it is a mistake. It cannot surely be that Lady Jane Blair has married a Yan— Ah, I beg pardon, I am sure—I mean an American."

Eaton smiled in his turn as he replied:

"Your conjecture was correct in the first place. The lady is and was Lady Jane Blair. Her husband, the owner of the *Saucy Jane*, is Captain Frank Blair; and they were married, not a month ago, in the schooner, off the island of Jamaica, after the governor had come on board to witness the ceremony. It was somewhat romantic—a runaway, in fact—and there was a great deal of trouble before the course of true love ran smooth; but it all came right at last; and the happy couple are now enjoying their honeymoon in New York."

The emotions of surprise and incredulity that chased each other over the face of Captain Dacres, were almost ludicrous to see.

He looked like a man whose dearest convictions were going to destruction with such rapidity, they gave him no time to think of anything coherent.

The idea of an *earl's daughter*, having deliberately gone and married a *Yankee*, was, to him, just as if the sun had turned into blood at mid-day—a thing astounding and incredible.

"Ah—pardon me," he began, with the accent of a man who does not know whether he is asleep or dreaming. "I beg your pardon; but are you sure that this is *really* the case! I know that there was a fell—a person—of the name of Blair—but—but—I—I want to be sure that you have made no mistake, sir. Not that I doubt your word at all; but are you sure that it is the same person. This Lady Jane Blair, pray bow do you know that she was the *real* Lady Jane?"

Eaton smiled at the evident embarrassment of the Englishman.

"The reason I know that it was the *real* Lady Jane Blair is this—I went on shore to see the Governor of Jamaica, Lord Gowrie. He received me himself, in his official capacity, when we lay in front of the town of Kingston; and I helped the lady to run away from her father's house, the very next night. Moreover, the Earl of Gowrie, as I said before, came on board this schooner, that now lies alongside, as soon as he found his daughter's good name involved in her marriage. He witnessed the wedding himself; the ceremony being performed by the chaplain of the governor, the Reverend Mr. Jones. I assure you, there is no doubt on the subject; and that you will find Lady Jane, when you get to New York, a perfect American in all her feelings, and as ready to throw up her handkerchief for the victory of to day, as any native-born that we have."

Dacres made no answer but a silent bow, and turned away, when Hull, in a low voice, observed, as soon as the Englishman was out of hearing:

"He takes it hard, Eaton. It's a bitter pill to swallow. They have been boasting that the time would come when British sloops-of-war would lie alongside of our frigates, and get best of them, I wonder how they will like to day's news, when it gets to them."

There was a grim smile on the face of the old captain, as he spoke; for Hull was a man of humor in his way; a very self-contained and dry kind of humor. He was one of those silent men, who pass for dull, till the occasion comes when they are thrown on their own resources, in a position of great difficulty; and who owe the success they achieve to their extreme coolness and tenacity of purpose.

When every officer in his ship had been anxiously urging, as far as he dared, that the ship should be fought at long range, so as to give the Constitution the full advantage of her superiority of metal, the old sailor, with his grim mouth set in the air of determination that he habitually wore, had kept his ship on her

* See the "Saucy Jane, Privateer," to which this story is a natural sequel.

The Three Frigates.

course, heedless of the loss she was suffering, without attempting to return a shot. The consequence was that, when he got alongside, the men at the guns were fresh and burning to work. The rapidity and precision of their aim, that had done the mischief to the *Guerriere*, was all owing to the absence of fire till that aim could be taken point-blank, the sights of the guns directed at the water-line of the enemy.

Now Hull was alone with a man he could trust, he relaxed from his usual stiff austerity and said to Eaton:

"Come down into my cabin, where we can talk, Eaton. I suppose you have some news to tell me."

Eaton followed him to the cabin, before he said, in the same confidential way as the other:

"Captain Hull, you are going to have trouble to take this prize into an American port. The sound of the cannonade has attracted a ship-of-war, and I think you will have to fight or run, in a short time."

Hull's face only grew more resolute than before, as he said:

"All right, Eaton. I shall not run you can bet on that! The Englishman has set me a better example."

Then, leaning closer to the young man, he added:

"Eaton, I will tell you a secret. I could have cut that ship to pieces at long range, without receiving a scratch, if I had wanted; but the time has come when John Bull has got to have his lesson, and there is no man so fit to give it to him as the man who helped to have you unjustly* punished for a cowardice, that he knew you were never guilty of. I tell you, sir, that if that Englishman had outfought me, at any point, I believe I should have killed myself, for mortification. He had to be beaten, and beaten so there was no more fight left in him. I think you will admit I did it pretty effectually. Next man who tries this old barky, will have something to go upon, and no one will be able to say that she was fought, in her first battle, in any but a fair way. Eaton, we have whipped him fairly, FAIRLY, sir. It was a stand-up fight, and the British lion got all he wanted, in less than ten minutes."

Eaton stirred a little.

"About the strange sail, sir—it is a square-rigged ship, on an easy bowline, coming from the northeast—looks so like another English frigate—I feel decidedly uneasy for the ship, after the injuries she has already sustained."

Hull waved his hand, as if the subject had but little interest, as he inquired:

"A frigate, did you say? Any larger than the one we took?"

"Not so large, I think, sir; but quite large enough to give you a hard tussle, and perhaps cripple the ship, so as to keep her from taking the prize into port."

"To tell you the truth, Eaton, I don't intend to take very much trouble to bring this prize into port. As far as her future use is concerned, we have pretty effectually knocked all that out of her. I think I shall burn or blow her up, as soon as we have frightened off this vessel that you say is coming. How close have you been to her, by the by?"

"Within a mile and a half, sir. She is a dull sailer, or I should have come in before. She has heard the firing, and come to see what it is all about. Have you any orders or requests for me, sir?"

The captain hesitated a little, and then said:

"I wish you could go ahead of the ship, to the port of Boston, and tell the folks at home what you saw to-day. I should like the old man at the farm to hear that Isaac has done well. No, on second thought it is not needed. The news will get there soon enough, and who knows what may happen before we get home? No, Eaton, I have no orders for you, except to go ahead and take all the British prizes that you can get a chance at."

The young privateersman bowed, and left the cabin, with the words:

"Captain Hull, the spell is broken. There is no such thing as British invincibility. Old Ironsides has destroyed the notion forever. It shall be my task, henceforth, to take the *Saucy Jane* into every place that there is danger, till the English begin to see that the Yankees they have been used to bully, all these years, have got the spirit of the men of Bunker Hill in them yet."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SLOOP-OF-WAR.

THE captain of the *Saucy Jane* returned on board his vessel, and the schooner glided away from the vicinity of the frigate with a grace and velocity that won the admiration of the captive Britons, who leaned over the bulwarks of the *Guerriere* and *Constitution*, and made remarks that showed their pleasure. The captain of the privateer, on his own quarter-deck, stood by the taffrail as long as he was near the frigate, his cap raised in salute, and, when he could be no longer seen, turned to his second in command, and said:

* See for the explanation of this allusion "The *Saucy Jane*, Privateer."

"I think we can afford to run down to the coast of Africa, Mr. Folger, and look up the East Indiamen that may be coming this way. Our cruise, so far, has been more profitable to our reputations than our pockets."

The man he addressed was a tall, long-limbed Yankee, and the first words he uttered told that he came from the State of Massachusetts, as he drawled out:

"Waal, Cap, I reckon you're abaout right in that. It'll be a cold lookout for the young 'uns at home, if we don't do more for the owner than we did last cruise. It's all very fine to see a battle, but it don't put the dollars into our pockets, by a darned sight. I should like to find a good fat Injyman to tackle, if so be we can find the varmint. They allers said, aboard the old *Enterprise*, that the Injymen had their cabins full of gold and silver, and that the captains never ate anything less expensive than turtle-soup, outer gold plates, covered with diamonds. I ain't much on the gold plate biz myself; but I would kinder like to take one home to the old woman at New Bedford. Haow she would stare, when she seen me a-comin' in, with the thing under my arm!"

Captain Eaton smiled. He had a pleasant smile; that of a happy man; and his voice was kind and sympathetic as he answered:

"I have some one at home myself, Folger, who would like to hear from the *Saucy Jane* as making money. I used to think that money was a thing no man ought to care about; but since I got married I find that my mind is changing rapidly.

"You kin bet your boots it will, Cap; and the longer you're married the more money you'll want," replied Folger, with an accent of intense earnestness that made his commander smile. "It's all very well till the kids come in; but when a man has ten of 'em, with the oldest a-gettin' to be big gals, it's a tough pull to get through the year without some of 'em a-wantin' suthin' that you can't git fur 'em; and then it's to sea we go and get more money, or the old cupboard gits too bare fur comfort, and the old woman gits too cantankerous to answer a civil question without a scowl. No, no, Cap; it's all very well to git spliced, but the main p'nt I should ax abaout, if a man come a-courtin' a darter of mine is, whether he is a good purvider or not. If he warn't, all the good looks and larnin' he might have, wouldn't be nothin' to me. I don't want no darter of mine to git as cantankerous as my old woman gits sometimes. It's ruination to their looks and happiness. It's a bad thing to be poor, Cap."

Eaton smiled at the practical way in which the hard old sailor spoke of the troubles that had evidently made his residence on shore decidedly uncomfortable, but he asked Folger:

"But how if the cbildren are boys, who can help their father? That would be a pleasant thing, would it not?"

Old Folger sighed slightly, as he answered:

"Ay, ay, Cap, pleasant enough to them as has 'em. I ain't sayin' but I'd like to have a boy of my own; but the Lord knows best, and he made 'em all gals, so that I don't have no peace at home, and that's haow I come to be at sea here, when I ought to be thinking of bein' laid up in or'ney, as they call it. Why, 'twas only last y'y'ge that I made a stake that ought to have kep' the baouse fur a good twelve-month. We faound whales in the Pacific, and got the *Enterprise* loaded daown to her bearin's in three weeks from the fust day we struck 'em; but I seen it wouldn't be enough to do 'em fur more'n half as long; and that's haow I come to ship with Cap Blair, when the schooner went out of New York harbor fust.—Scuse me, Cap, but there's that 'ere sloop-of-war again, sir."

He broke off abruptly to say this, with his keen old eyes on the apparition of a ship, under all sail, in the now light breeze, that ruffled the surface of the sea under the moonlight.

The stranger was the same Eaton had mentioned to Captain Hull, in the cabin of the *Constitution*, of much smaller size than the frigate, but with all the appearance of a ship-of-war.

She was close-hauled, to the leeward of the American schooner, but standing toward her, as if desirous of speaking her.

She had one row of guns or ports, though these were closed; and the main indication of her character lay in the trim appearance of her yards and masts.

Eaton eyed her carefully, and said to Folger:

"Now, if this schooner was only a vessel of the navy, I should feel in duty bound to sail close to that fellow, and try a few shots for the fun of the thing. I know just what metal that ship carries, and we could batter her all to pieces, without getting a scratch ourselves."

Folger hesitated a moment, and then asked:

"Waal, Cap, and why shouldn't we do it, naow?"

"Because the mission of the *Saucy Jane* is to destroy British commerce; and there is no better way to do that than to go to the coast of Africa. No, no, Folger; I admit that it is very tempting to see a sloop-of-war that you know only carries carronades, when we have a long thirty-two; but we have to consider the interests of the owner of the schooner, and they de-

mand that we should get some prizes, before we set our course for Sandy Hook."

The *Saucy Jane* sailed on, therefore, with the weather-gage, and by keeping her course to the eastward, for the coast of Africa, was able to pass the broadside of the sloop-of-war, without coming within range of the caronades, that were then carried as the almost exclusive armament of that class of ships.

Eaton watched the course of the ship till he came to a point where he saw that, in a few minutes more, she would be out of the range of his own piece, when he grew uneasy as he looked back at the *Constitution*, incumbered with her prize; and said to Folger, with a tone that showed his anxiety for the result of the affair:

"What do you think about our duty now, Mr. Folger? Here is an enemy's ship, which is very likely to attack the *Constitution*, when she is crippled with the care of that prize, and no doubt injured more or less herself. Ought we to fire at that ship and try to draw her astar us or not?"

Folger changed the quid of tobacco which he habitually carried in his right cheek over to his left; a way he had when he was delivering what he thought a weighty opinion; and replied, with due caution:

"I ain't prepared to say, Cap, exactly. There is Hackett, who's been to sea 'most as long as me; and he's a master-band to reason out things. S'pose we ax him what he thinks? It'll be his watch in another minute, and here he comes on deck."

The form of a short man, with shoulders of great breadth, came lumbering up the hatchway at that minute, and this individual came to the quarter-deck and touched his hat to the commander, saying:

"My watch, sir. Any orders?"

"We were just discussing a case in which we want your advice," replied the captain; and then he stated the case to Hackett, asking: "What do you think, Mr. Hackett? Is the *Constitution* in a state to be left to her own resources, or should we consider it our duty to do all we can to help her?"

Hackett looked all round the horizon before he answered, and then said, in an accent of profound conviction:

"Guess Old Ironsides kin take keer of herself, without any of cur help, Cap. She didn't lose no spars, and that's more'n half the battle. I'll bet my last dollar that she kin wipe a'ut that 'ere sloop-of-war so quick she won't know what hit her."

Their eyes were on the frigate while he was speaking, and as he finished they saw a row of lights suddenly appear, all round the side of the ship, at which Folger exclaimed:

"Gee Christopher Columbus! what's that, Cap?"

Eaton uttered a sigh of great relief, as he answered:

"She has gone to quarters. That is a direct challenge to the other ship to come down and attack her, if her commander is bold enough."

"And he ain't! he ain't!" cried Hackett, as he looked at the sloop-of-war.

The reason of his cry was made manifest almost immediately, when they saw the British ship heave-to, as soon as the open ports and battle lanterns of the *Constitution* showed that Old Ironsides was fully prepared to fight, and revealed her strength.

The Briton had evidently seen enough to satisfy him the contest he was seeking would only prove a disastrous one to him. With a discretion which, had it been imitated by Dacres, might have saved the *Guerriere*, the commander of the sloop-of-war boarded his tacks, and drew off to the south-east, after the schooner, which was by this time almost across his bow and getting to leeward.

The captain had determined to go after safer game than the appearance of the frigate promised to give him.

The two vessels were about three miles apart when this happened; and as soon as Hackett saw the maneuver, he observed, with a dry laugh, to his commander:

"We ain't likely to have much choice in the matter, Cap, it seems. Johnny Bull is arter us, anyhow, and I hope he'll like us better than the frigate, arter he get's through with us."

It was a curious thing, and showed the spirit of the American seamen of that day that, from the moment Eaton saw the sloop-of-war was coming to chase his own vessel, his face lighted up, and it was with a sigh of great relief that he said to Hackett:

"You are right, and I am glad of it. Captain Blair cannot blame us, if we are attacked and defend ourselves."

"Blame us!" echoed Hackett. "I guess not, Cap, if he's the man he allers used to be. Cap Blair would sooner fight a Johnny Bull, if he thought there was a good chance of whipping him, than he'd eat his dinner, any day. I ain't sayin' he's a hog arter fightin'; but if there is a chance to give John a good whippin', you kin bet on Cap Blair all the time."

Eaton smiled as he answered, with an air of great relief:

"I am satisfied, gentlemen, that you are on

my side in this matter, and I shall engage this sloop-of-war at once. We can cripple her at any rate, and that is worth the expenditure of shot that will be necessary. Call the men to quarters."

The men had not been in bed long when the order was given; for they had taken much interest in the combat between the Guerrières and Old Ironsides, and had remained on deck long after their duties were over for the day.

The summons found them in the first slumber that is the hardest to break; but as soon as the call echoed through the berth-deck for "all hands at quarters," they came tumbling up, half-dressed, their faces flushed with eagerness to engage the enemy, and fell into their places with a promptitude that showed how well they had been drilled on the privateer.

The schooner was kept away on her course to cross the bows of the sloop-of-war, and in so doing fell to leeward, in a manner to put her in a position the most favorable for a square-rigged ship, and the most unfavorable for a schooner, that could possibly occur. Nothing but an overmastering confidence on the part of Eaton in the superior swiftness of his vessel under any circumstances, made him adopt this course; for he might have easily escaped to windward, where he could be certain to have the best of the ship under any circumstances.

The wind had been lulled by the fierce cannoneading of the two frigates, till it had become just light enough for the little schooner to exhibit her best points, and the way she glided off under her enormous sails, at the rate of ten knots an hour, while the ship was not doing more than six, was enough to make a sailor's heart swell with pleasure.

She had need of all her speed to escape from the sloop-of-war in the position in which Eaton had placed her, by his resolve to run the gauntlet of the fire of the enemy.

As long as the schooner kept the weather-gage, her distance was just out of reach of the enemy's caronades, but as soon as she tried to run down under the fore-foot of the ship, she was obliged to cut the course of the English ship at an angle that made it certain she must pass within gunshot.

The captain of the Saucy Jane reasoned that the armament of the sloop-of-war would be composed of caronades almost exclusively, with the possible addition of a long twelve on the forecastle, to act as a chaser. Such was the armament of the Wasp, Hornet, and most of the American ships-of-war of the class below the large frigates; such was the equipment of the British ships that he had met before the war in the harbors of foreign powers.

With this notion in his mind, he ran his vessel about three miles in the direction of the Briton, till he was warned by the maneuvers of the latter that he was about to open on the Saucy Jane. The ship had been standing on her course close-hauled, her head directed to the south, while the schooner had her bows pointed south-east.

When they had first sighted each other, they had been about six miles apart, and that distance had now been decreased to less than one, when the ship yawned from her course widely, so as to bring her broadside to bear on the schooner.

A moment later the flashes of her guns were followed by the reports, after a short interval, and the shots came skipping over the waves past the schooner, with a velocity that showed she was well within range of her enemy's caronades.

The men of the privateer looked over the side of their vessel at the flying shot, with a coolness that showed they were not unaccustomed to the sight and sound of the deadly missiles.

The broadside passed harmlessly by the little privateer, but one shot came over the rail and struck a seaman in the body, sending the poor fellow flying in a mass of horrible, bloody fragments across the deck and into the sea.

Eaton started and uttered a low cry of anger, as he said to Folger:

"That settles it, Folger. The Englishman has got to suffer for that shot, or the name of the Saucy Jane will be disgraced. Clear away the long gun, and let 'em have it!"

The men uttered no cheers; but they went to the long gun, that frowned on its pivot-carriage amidships of the little vessel. It was the only gun they had on board the Saucy Jane, but it had saved them from defeat many a time, and was heavier than any gun on board any frigate in the British navy except those of the largest size.

It was a thirty-two-pounder, mounted on a carriage that was then of a novel construction, though its use has since become universal among ships, and also in forts.

The usual cannon-carriage of that day on ships of-war was a heavy, clumsy concern, that admitted of only one class of movement—that of elevation. If the direction of the fire was altered, the gun was useless till the course of the ship had been changed to give the piece a point-blank sight out of its open port.

The gun of the Saucy Jane had been constructed with the express view of securing an all-round fire at any vessel, whether ahead,

astern or abeam. The gun itself was mounted on a carriage that slid back and forth on a platform of iron, which, in its turn, reposed on a circular railway bolted into the deck, and thus admitted of the gun being pointed in any direction without disturbing the aim of the gunner till the piece was discharged.

The loading of the huge piece was soon accomplished, with the large crew of the schooner—much more than was sufficient to work her simple sails in any sort of weather—and the commander said to the old seaman who officiated at the pointing-gear:

"Now, then, Tom Tucker, do you think you can hit that fellow so as to disable him, by this moonlight? If you are at all doubtful, don't try it; as we cannot afford to miss."

Tom Tucker was a hard-featured, weather-beaten old salt, who had the habit of all the men on the Saucy Jane, derived from their old whaling practice, of chewing tobacco at all times and places, except while at the wheel.

Tom shifted his quid in the identical way it was always done by the first officer, Folger, and answered slowly:

"Waal, Cap, I can't say I'm *dead sure*; but this I *kin* say. I knows what I knows, and I knows this. It ain't more'n half-distance, and if them're caronades kin kerry to us, it stands to reason that we *kin* hit *them*. All I ax is that your honor will keep the schooner steady, while I *squintin'* through the sights."

The course of the schooner was shifted slightly, so as to bring her with her broadside full to the sloop-of-war, and the old gunner took a long sight over the top of his gun at the enemy's ship, fully exposed to the effect of the shot.

The piece at last exploded, and the captain looked eagerly at the trail of spray, cast up in the moonlight by the passage of the missile.

They saw it distinctly, skipping over the little swells, strike the sloop full in the waist, close to the mainmast, then under press of sail. The effect of that shot was an astonishment, even to the man, who fired it, for he cried out:

"Gee-rusalem cricket! I didn't think we'd ha' done it, Cap."

The mainmast of the stately ship that had been just before careering proudly over the waves, was seen to totter and come down with a crash, while the men of the schooner gave vent to their feelings in a shout of joy that rung over the waves, so that the Englishmen heard it and knew the Yankees were rejoicing over this most unexpected defeat.

Then the captain of the Saucy Jane turned to Hackett, and said, with a coolness that showed he knew how to manage men:

"That settles it, Mr. Hackett. You can keep the deck with the watch. We shall need no more powder to-night, with that fellow."

As he spoke, he went to the companionway, adding as he descended:

"Dismiss the men from quarters. No more danger from the John."

The men, glad to go below, disappeared from the decks of the beautiful little schooner, and silence reigned over the deep. The sloop-of-war had got all she wanted from the Saucy Jane.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAMAN.

OUT on the coast of Africa, the track of trade goes with the prevailing winds, and the path taken by ships to enter their desired haven, is no more a straight line than that of a comet in the heavens. The East Indianen, from Calcutta, round the Cape of Good Hope, and shape their course from thence to the coast of South America, aided by the southeast trade-winds, that reign to the south of the equator, till they catch the return winds that follow the currents flowing in the eddy of the Atlantic, and are enabled to cross the dangerous region of calms, known as the "Horse Latitudes."

From the coast of Africa, they slope across the Atlantic toward North America, once more, to get into the region, north of the trade-winds. They finally get into the favorable westerly winds of the north temperate zone, that waft them over to the English shores with a celerity that used to be appreciated in the days of sailing packets, when the passage from New York to London was made, on the average, two-thirds faster than that from London to New York.

It was at the turning-point, where the ships are apt to hang a few days, that a large ship, with all the appearance of an Indiaman, lay in the light airs that denote the edge of the Horse-Latitudes; her sails hanging in folds from her lofty spars; the motion of the sea, stirred by some far-off storm, rolling her massive hull to and fro; her masts swaying from side to side, tracing great circles on the sky with their trucks; the sails echoing with the noise of distant thunder, as they flapped to the motion of the vessel, which produced an artificial current of air at every heave.

Her worn and sea-stained hull showed that she had been on a long voyage; the fluttering robes of ladies told of the presence of passengers on board; the absence of lumber on deck showed that all her fresh provisions were eaten up, and that the passengers must have been on short commons for some time.

The long-boat, the usual recipient of sheep, pigs and poultry, was quite guiltless of contamination. The hencoops that still remained on deck showed, by the absence of occupants, that the passengers had eaten up all the chickens.

Nevertheless, the Indiaman was by no means a poverty-stricken looking ship, being of the largest size then built for the trade, and being dignified by a stern gallery, such as we never see in these days of smooth hulls and plain prose.

The Indiamen of the early part of the century were beautiful, in a picture, as no ship of our day can ever be made. The term "picturesque" is the only one that rightly expresses the appearance of those stately ships, as they went towering over the waves, with their great spread of yellowish canvas, made of the Indian grass cloth; their ports and guns giving them the appearance of line-of-battle ships; their quaint gilded figure-heads gleaming in the sun.

Most of them were as large as the largest frigates, and built as strong as those vessels, with an armament that enabled them to fight the pirates that then infested the China seas, and all the approaches to the East Indies.

More than once in the history of the Napoleonic wars, then at their height, had the Indiamen had to fight; and on one occasion a French squadron, comprising a line-of-battle ship and two frigates, had been beaten off by a fleet of Indiamen.

The ship that we now come upon was armed, as one could see from the look of her ports. Down either side of her decks ran a row of cannon, of the short and manageable variety known as caronades, easily handled by small crews.

The quarter-deck cabin was of the largest size, and the rich carved woods that made their appearance on the doors gave promise of greater riches within—a promise that was amply fulfilled by the interior of the main saloon, where the passengers met at dinner, the decorations being really superb.

The captain of the Indiaman had just taken the sun for the day, and was devoting his energies to that paternal form of flirtation with the youngest ladies on board, in which captains of packet-ships have always indulged from time immemorial.

Captain Cole was a typical sailor of the old kind, with one eye on the weather and the other on his lady passengers. He felt that a large part of his success in life had been derived from the way in which he had made his ship a popular one for rich passengers going to or from India. In those days few people went to India, except cadets who had fortunes to make, with every opportunity to do it; and young ladies trying to get married, an object which they generally accomplished in a month or two, owing to the scarcity of the sex in the hot but golden field of England's enterprise.

Captain Cole had taken his altitude for the day, and his mind was easy on the position of his ship.

The only thought on his mind was of the dinner which would be announced by the steward in a few minutes, and the only problem was, which lady he should invite to his side without making the others jealous. He had finally determined on taking in the prettiest girl in the ship, and was trying to think of a way in which he could elude the vigilance of a certain widow, who had made it a point to take possession of the captain at all times, in and out of season, when the lookout at the mast-head, for the first time in many days, sent down the hail to the deck:

"SAIL HO!"

The cry produced the usual excitement among the passengers, who had been cooped up in the ship so long they had become very anxious for a change. There was a rush to the rail at once, and an anxious peering over the side of the ship, with all sorts of questions and exclamations to the nearest officers of the ship as to "where the sail was? what the officers knew of it? whether it was a pirate?" and ever so many more that made the mates smile at the idea they should be expected to answer them; when as yet the sail had only been announced, and the direction of its appearance had not been mentioned.

The captain, with the politeness of an old hand at the business, said to the ladies who were crowding him:

"We will find out all about him in a moment; if you will be only quiet till I question the man."

Silence being thus secured, he bawled up the rigging:

"Where away, my man?"

"Over the port quarter, sir," came down the answer. "She brings some wind with her, sir, as near as I can see."

The captain smiled as one well pleased, as he remarked to the ladies of the quarter-deck:

"There; you see what it is to have luck. We have been wishing for wind for a whole week, and here it comes, with a sail into the bargain. Come, ladies, dinner is ready. Let us go. Mr. Tinker, take charge."

Then, in a low voice, that no one heard but the officer to whom it was addressed:

"Report, as soon as you find out who she is."

Mr. Tinker was the first mate of the ship, in days when, to be mate of an Indiaman, was to be a great man in his way.

He cast a glance at his captain that showed he understood him; but only said:

"Ay, ay, sir."

Then the captain went below, and became the most jolly of hosts for the next five minutes, at the end of which time he suddenly whispered to his neighbor, Miss Kitty Clayborne, the prettiest girl in the ship:

"I am going to ask a favor of you, Miss Clayborne. I am wanted on deck, and I don't want any one else to know it. Will you excuse me, if I leave you for a few moments?"

The young lady addressed—a dark brunette, with the blackest of eyes and the most roguish of faces—pouted a little at the sudden, though confidential request, and answered:

"Of course, if you *must*, you *must*; but I think it is a shame that they won't let you eat your dinner in peace. Can't I go on deck, too? I love the sea, and all sorts of excitement; and I know there is something wrong, or you would not leave us, now: a thing you never did in all your life before."

The captain was embarrassed; but he had served too long in Indiamen not to have a great deal of tact, and he knew that to make a mystery with a young woman, was the surest way to excite her curiosity.

So he decided to take her into his confidence, and whispered:

"To tell you the truth, I am a little uneasy about that sail. I must ascertain who and what she is, or I shall lose all my appetite. If I promise to tell you all I know when I come back, will you let me go, and keep the secret of *why I go?*"

Kitty Clayborne raised her dark eyes to him, with a look that told she was frightened, as she asked, in a whisper of equal confidence:

"Uneasy, did you say? You don't surely think she is an enemy! Is there any danger?"

Captain Cole frowned with annoyance, as he said, hastily:

"No, of course; but there may be some trouble, and I want to get on deck without alarming the rest of the passengers."

Kitty immediately changed her tactics, and made the remark aloud:

"Oh, captain, I want you to go back to the quarter deck for me, if you will be so kind. I left my little vinaigrette there, and I wouldn't like to trust the stewards with it. Will you be so kind as to go and get it for me?"

The sailor rewarded her for her artifice with a beaming smile as he said:

"With the greatest pleasure, Miss Clayborne."

He rose and went on deck at once; found the mate, with the glass at his eye; followed that officer to the forward part of the main deck, to get out of hearing of the passengers, who might be listening; and asked him with some anxiety:

"Well, what do you make of her? Is it a Frenchman or what?"

Mr. Tinker took down the glass, and replied:

"I don't think it's a Frenchman, captain, on account of the rig. All the schooners that ever I saw, that bailed from French ports, had the old square topsail rig. This fellow has two masts, but only fore-and-aft sails: a Yankee rig, all the world over."

The captain's face grew grave, as he heard this very unwelcome piece of news. Of a Frenchman he had the contempt which it was then the fashion for British sailors to exhibit so much, and which rested so largely on prestige, and the renown acquired by the exploits of Nelson and the heroes who surrounded him. But the Yankee was a different thing altogether.

Captain Cole had been on American waters, and had often seen American ships handled in a way to beat British sailors, by the skill and promptitude with which all operations of seamanship were carried on.

And a Yankee in that sea must certainly be an enemy; for the war had begun, and the news of hostilities had reached India just as the Madras sailed, with the news, in addition, that the English Government had sent a large fleet of ships to the coast of America to wipe the American navy from the face of the ocean.

The captain of the Indiaman took the glass from the hands of Tinker and leveled it at the distant sail, which, as the lookout had said, was on the port quarter of the Madras, and therefore had not been noticed till plainly in sight.

That she was bringing a breeze with her was shown by the darkening of the sea all round her and the fact that she was moving, while the Madras was entirely becalmed.

The strange schooner was still about five miles off and could be studied through a glass.

She seemed to be a large vessel for her class, covered with a great press of canvas. Her topmasts were hidden by the immense clouds of staysails, and her jibs swelled out in the balloon fashion now so common with yachts, but rare with sea-going vessels.

Tinker stood behind his commander, with a

look on his face that showed his concern. As Cole put down the glass, his subordinate ventured to say:

"Regular flyer, isn't she, sir? Got a mainsail on her fit for the topsail of a ship-of-the-line. Must be a privateer."

Cole looked round him apprehensively, as he answered:

"Hush! Do you want all the passengers to hear you? Get the men to the guns as quickly as you can; but don't alarm the passengers, for your life. It will be hard enough to fight that schooner as it is; but if the women get into high-strokes before we begin, there will be the devil to pay."

Then he turned round to go back to the cabin, adding:

"Get the men to work quietly, and as soon as you are ready, let me know. I must break the news to the ladies gradually."

He had been too long at sea in Indiamen not to know that, of all people, those who are rich are the easiest to frighten in the presence of real danger.

To break the news as gradually as he could became his aim in the cabin, and with that object he began to talk about the war still raging between England and the French nation, in which so many glories had been gained by the British.

From thence he led the conversation to the American war, of which they had heard, as a thing of little importance, and finally told them it was more than likely that the Madras might be attacked on her way home by some of the little privateers, the only hope of the Americans in the war.

"For, of course," he added, "their navy will be swept from the face of the sea, in a very short time. Their only hope is in taking our unarmed ships, when they can find them; and it is very likely that one or two of them may have a shy at this old ship. If they do, I wish them joy of their bargain. They may find us as hard to crack as the monkey found the stone-cocoonut when he took it for a real one. Hey, ladies? Colonel Maddox, what should you say, if I told you that the schooner, now in sight, looks very much like a Yankee privateer?"

Colonel Maddox was an elderly officer of uncertain temper and certain wealth, who had the gout and liver complaint, and was the uncle of Kitty Clayborne, (to whom it was rumored he was to leave the lacs of rupees he had accumulated in India, by means more common than creditable in those days.)

Colonel Maddox had been in the service of the East India Company, when he went out, forty years before, as a boy cadet. He had made the acquaintance of a native prince, whose confidence he had acquired and then abused, till he had involved his friend in a war with the all-powerful company, that had ended in the conquest of the prince's dominions and the confiscation of all his jewels. Of the first named, the colonel had secured the largest slice; of the latter he had selected the best, as he left the company's service, to enter that of the crown, at a time when commissions were for sale, like any other commodities.

He was a brave and unscrupulous man, of the type of military adventurers who followed the example of Clive, and carved out of India an enormous empire, that looked splendid until one examined under the splendor, and found blood on every fold of England's garments.

Colonel Maddox had a red face, with a yellow tinge to the red that showed the constant struggle between bile and gout for the mastery of his frame.

He looked up as Cole asked him the question, and answered, in a way that showed he understood the object of the captain in speaking:

"What should I say, captain? I should say that you had a ship to defend that is worth defending, and I should offer my services to help you in any fighting that may take place. A privateer, did you say? They are not dangerous to a ship of this kind, with the guns we have. We can blow any privateer that ever sailed out of the water. But is it true you think the sail is a privateer from the great Yankee nation?"

"It is actually true, colonel, and I am going to quarters as soon as the breeze catches us. So if the ladies wish to see a little fun, they will have an opportunity."

The lady passengers had listened in dead silence to the whole speech; but as soon as it was finished they began to make a great noise—all but Kitty Clayborne, who remained silent, with a smile on her lips that showed she did not care for what happened.

The widow of General McTavish, who was the ranking lady on board, insisted that the captain "had no right to endanger the lives of the passengers that he should send a boat to the strange schooner, and say that there were ladies on board the Madras, and that, if they were hurt or insulted in any manner, the whole vengeance of the British Government would be visited on the heads of the wicked Yankees, who dared to think of attacking one of the ships of their natural rulers, the English nation."

Mrs. Major Brown, (who was coming home for her health, leaving the relieved Brown at a

cantonment where the thermometer stood at a hundred in the shade half the time, but where he preferred to stay rather than face the constant scolding of his amiable spouse) said that, "as for her, she didn't care very much whether the ship was taken or not. She could not be more miserable than she was, away from her darling husband, and would welcome anything that would bring a change from the monotony of the voyage."

But they all agreed to one thing, that the captain was on no account to fire off those dreadful guns, without giving them due notice, or he would have the lives of more than one lady to answer for.

The captain promised all that every one asked, to get rid of the noise; as the mate came in, to announce the men at quarters, and the stranger coming to speak the Madras. Mrs. McTavish gave a loud scream and proceeded to faint away, in the most orthodox style, at which all the ladies at once crowded round, and got so busy in resuscitating the lady of the defunct general, that they forgot their own terrors till the report of a gun, fired without any warning at all, sent them all to screaming dismally, and led to the prompt and almost miraculous recovery of Mrs. McTavish, who screamed louder than any one else.

By that time, however, the captain had left the cabin, and it was discovered that Kitty Clayborne had followed him to the deck, without telling any one else.

It is only fair to the reader that we should follow the prettiest girl in the ship, and see what had become of her; for Kitty Clayborne was a darling little thing, and had actually gone out to see what a battle was like.

She came of a fighting family.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YANKEE SCHOONER.

WHEN the girl went on deck, it was to follow the captain of the Madras, and with the intention of seeing all that was to be seen.

Kitty Clayborne was of Irish extraction on the mother's side, and had been brought up in a hunting county, where she had learned to ride to the hounds at the age of twelve, and had developed into a regular little dare-devil.

Like most high-spirited girls, she was braver than many a man, from her ignorance of the real elements of danger.

He father had been an officer of the army, and had died on the battle-field when she was only four years old, at which time her uncle, Colonel Maddox, who, with all his reckless ways of making a fortune, had a kind heart for his kith and kin, took her and her mother—his sister—into his protection and had supported them ever since.

The death of Mrs. Clayborne a few years before, had compelled him to send for Kitty to India, whence she was now returning with the colonel, to settle down in England for the rest of their lives.

Kitty had heard so much about battles from the time she had first learned to talk that she had imbibed a great curiosity to see one; and the present was the first opportunity that had ever come in her way. She was a good deal like a boy in his first fight, with all the tingling excitement of the combative part of his nature, mingled with a feeling that he does not know himself sufficiently to be sure of his own courage. The ordinary tremors of femininity were no part of Kitty's nature, she having caught so much of the battle spirit on the hunting field.

As soon as the captain of the Indiaman left the cabin to go on deck, after the report of Mr. Tinker, Colonel Maddox followed, and Kitty, without a word to any one, slipped out after the colonel, and got up on the summit of the poop, from whence she could get a view of all the deck, without any one noticing her.

In those days, ships of the Indiaman class had very high forecastles and quarter-decks, with several stories on each, passing by different names. The extreme stern of the Madras was built up in such a form, to contain a small cabin, for the use of the captain, and on the roof of this cabin Kitty Clayborne perched herself, sheltered from view by the ornaments that were common in the ships of that time, and having a complete view of everything that took place. The only man that saw her go there was the sailor at the wheel, and he said nothing.

When the girl arrived on deck, she caught the first plain sight of the schooner, that had caused all the excitement.

The craft was about a mile and a half away from the ship, and the darkening of the water all round her showed, even to Kitty, that she was bringing the wind with her.

The shadow ahead of the little vessel also showed that the wind would reach the Indiaman, before the schooner had a chance to run in upon the ship. In fact, before Kitty had been on deck a minute, the Madras gave a sudden thrill as her sails filled, for the first time in a week, and the stately Indiaman heeled over to the influence of the wind, and began to move through the water at a slow and majestic pace, that showed the stranger would have no difficulty in following and catching the ship.

As soon as the breeze struck the Madras, Captain Cole began to shout orders, and the men hauled at the ropes to adjust the sails at the most favorable angle to the wind.

Colonel Maddox, with a look on his face that Kitty had never seen there before—the look of battle—was standing by the captain; and she noticed that Cole frequently spoke to Maddox, as if asking for advice.

Then she turned to the schooner, and was struck, for the first time, with the beautiful picture presented by the strange vessel.

The small black hull, hidden from view entirely at the angle which she then presented to the ship careening over to the strong breeze, yet clove the water with a rapidity that was in marvelous contrast to the slow progress of the Indiaman.

The masts looked too long for the size of the vessel, and the sails had the appearance of an unreal vision.

Kitty watched the approach of the stranger with an interest and curiosity she could not hide. She had no thought of danger. It is true she had heard the schooner was probably a "Yankee," and to her mind the word "Yankee" presented a good deal of what was repulsive; but the schooner before her was so beautiful, she could not bring herself to think but what there was some mistake as to the nationality of the new-comer.

She had always been taught that "Yankees" were a sort of degenerate Britons who had rebelled against all laws, human and divine, and had been allowed to go by the mother they had insulted, more in disgust than defeat.

That there were any such things as good and handsome "Yankees" had never entered her mind; and she was accordingly prepared to be shocked and surprised, but not fascinated, by any thing in the shape of a Yankee.

She saw the schooner come closer and closer, in a silence and mystery that gave her a certain impression of power, straight for the Indiaman, without swerving a hair's breadth, and at last was within the distance when the carriages of the large vessel were capable of reaching her with their missiles.

Then she heard Captain Cole, after some orders that she did not understand, in her ignorance of the sea, cry out:

"FIRE!"

The next minute came the flash of a gun from the side of the ship, followed by the thundering report; and the girl saw the shot go skipping over the waves, straight toward the schooner, with a velocity and directness that left no doubt of its hostile intention.

Unlike a man-of-war, the Indiamen did not believe in firing shots ahead or stern of a suspicious vessel, to inquire about her character. With a simplicity and directness that showed Captain Cole meant business every time, the gun was fired straight at the schooner, and struck her square in the bow, with the result that she instantly luffed up into the wind, her sails shaking, and threw out to the breeze the flag of the United States of America, which, until that hour, Kitty Clayborne had never seen.

In another moment an answering flash from the stranger was followed by a report so much heavier than any that came from the Indiaman's battery, that Kitty gave an instinctive shudder, and murmured to herself:

"Heavens, what a big gun!"

The next minute the shot of the sooner came ricochetting over the water and struck the huge ship in the waist.

What injury was done Kitty could not see, for the interposition of the huge main course, that was between her and the waist of the ship, but the girl heard a cry of agony, about which there was no mistake, and the crashing of splinters, which made her begin to wish she had not come on deck.

Then she heard Captain Cole shout:

"Give it to them, boys! Fire every gun you have in the broadside! Then came a tremendous crash, as the guns of the Indiaman, ten in a broadside, went off, all together, and Kitty saw the splash of the shots; as they went over the waves in a volley.

What was the effect on the schooner she could not at first see, for the smoke; but when it cleared away sufficiently for her to note what had happened, she saw the white sails of the graceful little stranger full of holes, and a breach had been knocked in her bulwarks besides.

The schooner immediately hauled her wind and made the best of her way to windward, while the Indiaman, with her sails filled with a fresh breeze, went off to leeward as fast as she could drive.

Kitty caught the spirit of the battle with marvelous rapidity, as she noted the mischief done by the missiles of her friends, and in a fit of enthusiasm sprung up and cried out:

"Bravo! Well done, men! Hurrah for old England!"

The sound of her voice was just what was needed to encourage the sailors, who are, of all humanity, the most susceptible to the voice of the opposite sex.

Kitty, the moment she had screamed, turned

as red as fire, for she saw her uncle frown deeply and start, as if some one had stuck a pin in him. But the sailors had spied her on the top of the poop, and greeted her with a cheer so hearty that it brought the blood to her cheek still deeper with pleasure, as she heard one man roar:

"Hurrah for the little lady! That's the girl for a sailor's wife! Hurrah, boys! There's pluck for ye!"

Then she saw her uncle hurry up to her, and heard his voice, for the first time since she had known him, in tones of unmistakable anger, saying to her:

"Get down into the cabin this instant, child! Do you want to get killed? Get down, I say! How the deuce did you get here? This is no place for a lady. The men will be calling out your name presently, and a pretty reputation you will get. Go down-stairs at once! I insist on it!"

By this time he was close to her, and the girl, who had been spoiled by him all her life, immediately began to plead:

"Now, uncle Jim, don't be cross with me; but I want to see a battle. I am dying to see it all through. Don't make me go down-stairs. I promise I'll be as good as gold, if you'll only let me stay."

And so on, with all the pleading arts she was mistress of—and the experience of Kitty in the matter of coaxing was not by any means contemptible—till the colonel, who really admired the courage of the girl, said in a grudging sort of way:

"You always were a hoyden, Kate, and I don't believe you will ever be like the rest of women. You can stay if that schooner goes away; but if she starts to come back again, I shall insist on your going below."

Kitty clasped her hands as she said, with the most demure of faces:

"I promise it faithfully, uncle. I will. I will, I will! But don't send me down now, when the fun is just beginning. Isn't it fun, uncle? I thought it would be dreadful, but all I can see is that we have made that little thing run away, and I think it was a shame to fire all those guns at her. She is such a little thing! Why, we could knock her into pieces if we wanted, couldn't we?"

The old soldier looked at the schooner with the eye of a veteran who had seen many battles.

He shook his head rather gravely, as he said to his niece:

"I don't know about that, Kit. She carries a big gun, and that single shot of hers did a good deal of harm."

Kitty's face paled slightly, as she asked, in a half-whisper:

"What? did it hurt any one?"

The colonel hesitated a moment, ere he answered confidentially:

"Yes, child, it did. Don't tell any one; but it killed three men, and went through the foot of the mainmast. You don't know what that means, of course; but I can tell you that, if we lose our mast, we shall be at the mercy of that little schooner you think so pretty and harmless. It is a good thing you have such pluck, child, for you may need it all before long."

Kitty, not quite understanding him, but feeling that there was yet a danger that she knew nothing of, asked him:

"Why, what can the danger be, uncle?"

The colonel was saved the necessity of a reply, as Kitty was of any further questioning, by the sudden change in the demeanor of the schooner. Hitherto, she had been running away from them with a velocity that had already increased the distance between her and the Madras to over a mile, when they saw her alter her course and heave her bows up into the wind, in which position she hung a few seconds. Then came the flash of her one gun, and the shot came skipping along the water, toward the ship, as straight as if it had come from pistol-distance. Kitty saw it coming, and shuddered instinctively. A little while before, she would have watched it with vague curiosity; but now she knew what it meant.

The shot came at the ship and Captain Cole called out:

"Hard a port, hard a port! Give her all the chance you can!"

The helmsman gave a rapid turn to the wheel, and the head of the great Indiaman swept round, with a hope of saving the ship from the aim of the unknown gunners.

The report of the gun reached them just before the shot; but the latter came hard after it, and struck the poop of the Madras with a force that sent the captain's cabin into splinters.

But for the fact that Colonel Maddox, in his first scolding of his niece had drawn her away from the place she had occupied during the early part of the fight, the days of Kitty Clayborne would have been numbered by that shot.

As it was, the ball passed through the cabin and knocked things endways; but the girl escaped unhurt, and immediately began to laugh, in the impulse that all plucky people have, to rejoice over a happy escape from imminent danger.

"Not that time, hey, uncle?" she cried, as the shot went over the rest of the ship without doing

any more damage. "They didn't hit the thing they wanted that time, did they?"

The colonel made no answer, for he was too busy watching the progress of the shot after it had passed over the ship.

It went on for nearly a mile before it dropped into the sea; and his face was very grave as he turned to his niece, and said quietly:

"Kitty, my dear, I don't want to frighten you, but that fellow is going to make a good deal of trouble. He can reach us now, and I am afraid we cannot reach him."

The girl did not seem to understand him, for she replied at once:

"Not reach him! Why, we did reach him just now, and I saw the bits of wood knocked out of him. Look! There! They are going to fire again! Now we shall see."

As she spoke, the whole battery of the ship was discharged again, with all the precision and care that could be expected from the crew of a merchantman.

The colonel and his niece watched the shots, and could see that almost all sunk into the sea before they got as far as the schooner. The few that seemed to reach her, fell from her, in the waves, with a lack of force that they could appreciate, at even that distance, and Kitty exclaimed.

"Why, what is the matter? They don't seem to hurt her this time, uncle. What can the reason be?"

The old soldier made no answer but to pat her on the shoulder, saying:

"There, there, my child. Go below. This is going to be a hard fight, and it is no place for a girl like you. I must go forward and see the captain."

So saying, and without paying any more attention to her, he went to where Captain Cole stood by the mast, looking gloomy, and addressed the commander with the words:

"Bad lookout, Cole, but it might be worse. We must draw him closer."

Cole shook his head, as he replied gloomily:

"I am afraid it is no use, colonel. He carries too much weight for us. If it does not come on to blow, we are going to be dismasted."

"Is it as bad that?" asked Maddox.

"Yes, sir. If we get another shot, where the first came, we shall lose the mainmast, and after that it is only a question of how much pounding the old Madras will stand, before we strike."

The colonel's face flushed with anger, as he said:

"Strike, sir! Strike! Why, we have not been fairly into action yet. We don't give up so easily as that in the army."

Cole sighed.

"I know all you would say, colonel; but you don't reflect that a sea-fight and a land one are not the same thing. It is soon decided at sea, and there is only one thing we can do with that fellow, if we cannot run from him."

"And what is that?" asked the colonel, sharply.

"To strike," was the gloomy answer. "It is a hard thing to do, especially in our case; for it will be my ruin; but it must be done. I am responsible for the safety of the passengers, and we have a number of women on board, whom it would never do to expose to the hazards of a sea-fight, which can only have one issue. Colonel Maddox, we shall have to give in, if that fellow does not run away."

This contingency did not seem very likely to occur; for at that moment the schooner fired another shot, and sent it with such accurate aim, that the wounded mainmast quivered to the shock of the ball, as it buried itself therein, and, the next minute, the cracking of the solid wood told them that the wounded spar was about to yield to the pressure of her sails and the wind.

Cole, with the instinct of a sailor, whose first thought is for the safety of his ship, shouted out orders to clew up the sails, at the risk of being taken by the privateer; but before the task could be accomplished a crashing was heard, and the tall mast swayed to and fro and came down over the side, amid a general groan from the sailors, who saw that the fate of the poor Madras was sealed.

Kitty Clayborne, with a flutter at her heart she could not account for, saw the fall of the spar, and even she realized the ship was no longer in a condition to fight.

Then, amid a dead silence aboard the Madras, the strange schooner shaped her course toward the helpless ship.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SURRENDER.

THE approach of the Yankee schooner was managed with a caution that showed she appreciated the powers of destruction still possessed by the Madras, and did not mean to expose herself to a second broadside.

The Indiaman was lying with her head to windward, where she had fallen, with the disappearance of her mainmast. The wreck of her spars was towing in the sea, and the captain had turned all his energies to the task of getting the damages repaired, with the force he had in the crew. All thought of resistance was abandoned at the fall of the mast, for it was clearly

The Three Frigates.

seen that it would entail a perfectly useless slaughter, without a hope of ultimate success.

The men went to the task before them, and left the guns, while the schooner, as if disdaining to fire at a foe so completely prostrated, advanced toward the Indiaman, and took up a raking position by her quarter, when she hoisted out a boat, and sent it over the sea remaining with the long gun trained on the Madras to protect the boat from any possible attack.

She did this before she ventured within gun-shot of the carronades, and the captain of the Madras, when he saw the action, said with a grim smile to Maddox:

"He does not want to cultivate any closer acquaintance than need be, colonel. Oh, if we only had a long gun, how we could riddle him!"

Maddox made no answer but a gloomy grunt and watched the boat till it had come close enough to distinguish the features of the crew, when he observed to Cole, with a bitter smile:

"What a shame it is that we have to yield to such a lot of low scoundrels as that, Cole! If we could only get them alongside! But they haven't pluck enough to come. Here we are, picked to pieces by a little schooner, that this ship could run down without feeling the shock. What are we going to do? I swear I don't like to give it up so. If we could only entice the schooner alongside, we could sink her without any trouble. Why not play her a trick to get her there. I wouldn't do it with a proper enemy, but these Yankees are not properly human. They are only a sort of animal, between a fox and a savage. It would be a good thing if we could do it."

Captain Cole hesitated. He was as angry as Maddox, but he was more prudent.

"What could we do?" he asked.

The colonel drew him to one side and whispered:

"Why not pretend to strike, and then open on him, as he came alongside. We could lull his suspicions, and then give it to him. Sink him, curse him! Don't give him a chance."

There was all the intense hatred of a family-quarrel in the man's eyes and voice as he made the proposition; but Cole shook his head.

"No, colonel, it wouldn't do. We might succeed; but the chances would be against us, and he would have a right to treat us with great severity, if we did fail."

The colonel answered with the same hungry, fierce aspect as before:

"Cole, if that fellow takes this ship, I am ruined. All the fruit of my life is on this ship, in a form in which the scoundrels can get it without any trouble. I will give you a thousand pounds in good hard cash, if you will try my plan."

Cole hesitated. A thousand pounds was a great sum in those days, when the price of gold had reached a height never since paralleled, till the American Civil War.

"What is your plan?" he asked, with a voice that showed he was tempted to try it.

"It is this," said the colonel, with the look of a demon: "Let the boat get alongside, and then heave a shot into her, as soon as the men have come on deck. Then give them all the steel, and let them have it so quick they won't have time to make a noise. The plan is sure to succeed, for they won't dream of a merchantman doing a thing of that sort. It is only a strata-gem. These wretches are only pirates under another name, and any means are excusable to get even with them. There is only one thing I blame you for, so far, captain; and that is that you did not sink the schooner at the first fire, when she was under your guns for nearly five minutes. If we could only get her alongside again, as near as she was when we first fired, we might have a chance yet."

Cole nodded his head, as he answered:

"That is true enough, but it is the fault of the men. They had so little practice at guns that they are very bad shots. If we are to have any chance with that fellow, we must do it all at one broadside, within pistol-shot."

"That is just what I want to do," said the colonel, eagerly. "Listen: that boat is rowing to the ship in a way that shows her men think they are in no danger. They think we are under the guns of that schooner, and dare not fight, for fear of being picked to pieces by her long gun. They will come alongside and haul us, to know we have surrendered, and we must answer that we have. Then, when we have them on board, where they cannot escape, we must stave in the boat with a shot, and kill or take the boat's crew prisoners. The last may be the best; for it will give us a hostage in the person of the commander, whoever he is, in the boat. Then we must signal to the schooner that the boat is staved in, and ask her to come alongside or send another. In any event, we shall have captured half the crew of the schooner before she discovers anything wrong, and we can coax her alongside in some way. Once alongside, the rest is easy. We must have the guns trained and loaded for a broadside that shall do the business at one stroke."

Cole listened to this plan of treachery in silence, and when the colonel had finished, he observed, in the driest of tones:

"Well, colonel; I have often heard that gentlemen of the Indian army were unscrupulous; but I never believed it till now. If we were to fail in this plan, do you know what might be done to us, according to sea-law?"

Colonel Maddox shrugged his shoulders, as he replied:

"Oh yes, you mean it would be an infraction of the laws of war, which would render it right for the enemy to show us no quarter. That is all very well with a ship of the regular navy; but with these privateer fellows, it is different altogether. We must eat them or they will eat us. They are the wild beasts of the ocean, and must be exterminated."

Cole looked at the boat, now within less than a quarter of a mile, and his hesitation ended in the words:

"I'll do it, colonel. After all, it is only a privateer, and that's the same as a pirate."

So saying, and hardening his heart against the promptings of his old sense of sailor's faith, the commander of the Madras went forward among the men, and gave the necessary orders to put in force the plan of Colonel Maddox.

Meantime the boat came closer and closer, till Kitty Clayborne, who was still watching the whole thing from the summit of the poop, not quite comprehending why the schooner had ceased to fire, and why the sailors of the Indiaman did not fire on the boat, saw the occupants plainly, and thought that she had never seen such a queer set in her life.

In the stern-sheets of the boat, which was a small thing, sharp at both ends, and pulling only four oars, sat a very long, slab-sided man, with a keen face and a skin like parchment.

He was steering with an oar, in a style which the girl had never seen before, never having beheld a whaler. The boat was a whale-boat, and the man in the stern steered it like a whale-boat.

To complete the similarity to the hunters of the sea, this man had in his hand a long harpoon, with which he emphasized his remarks to his crew, as they pulled away for the Indiaman at a rapid pace.

The men did not seem to be armed, and the whole proceeding had such an innocent aspect that Kitty murmured:

"Poor fellows! I hope our people will not hurt them, but how silly they are, to be sure."

Colonel Maddox, on the other hand, had a grim smile on his face, as he said to Cole:

"They say that Yankees are smart at tricks; but those fellows are just ripe for the sickle. Show them no mercy, or we are lost, and you are ruined."

Then the boat came within hail of the ship, and a voice, like the bellow of a bull in fly-time, roared across the water:

"Ship ahoy! What ship is that?"

The boat kept on the side toward the schooner and rested on its oars, at about three cable-lengths from the ship, on a line with her stern windows, so that no gun could be brought to bear on her without altering the position of the ship—a matter of time in her crippled condition.

Captain Cole, seeing this, began to think the Yankees not so rash as Maddox had believed them, and it was with a sulky air that he answered:

"The East India Company's ship, Madras, from Calcutta to London. What schooner is that, and why have you fired at us?"

The reply seemed to tickle the long man in the stern-sheets, for he laughed heartily, as he hailed back:

"Ship ahoy! Say! Don't you ever read the papers? Why did we fire at you? Waal, that's what I call a reg'lar snorter of a question. Because you shot at us, in course. What kind o' folks are you, any haow? Fired at ye? In course we did. What d'ye take us fur? Suckers! I want you to unnerstand that the Suoy Jane warn't built o' putty; nuther were her captain born yesterday. He cut his eye-teeth more'n a year ago, and leff off spoon wittles, abaout the same time. Air you a-goin' to strike that 'ere flag o' yourn, or ain't ye? That's what I want to know? My name's Eph'm Folger, and I hail from ole Nantucket, along with Hackett, and I come to tell you that Cap Eaton says if you don't pull down that dodratted old rag o' yourn, he'll be 'bliged to send a few shot into your old hulk to teach you that when a Yankee privateer sends you her compliments, it's allers best to give in quietly. Waal, hev ye struck or not? That's what I wanter know."

Cole, with the same appearance of bitterness, answered:

"We have no choice but surrender, sir. Your schooner has the advantage; but if you had only given us a chance with the guns on an equal footing, we would have stood you a good fight."

Folger laughed again as he answered:

"Waal, you air the curiosest lot o' folks I ever seen. Do you s'pose we come aout to give folks a chance to beat us when we want to beat them? No, Mr. Johnny Bull, that ain't aour style o' doin' biz. We Yankees fight to win, every time, and don't give away no chances to any one, if we can help aourselves, and we find we generally kin. I don't wan't to hurry you folks; but I may as well say that Cap Eaton

told me to tell you that, if that 'ere flag didn't come daown in two minutes arter I spoke you, he's a-goin' to open fire again, and hull ye, every time. Naow, what d'ye say?"

The captain of the Madras appeared to be very much hurt at the way in which Folger spoke, for he said, in a tone of indignation:

"Yes, sir, you know you are safe in that threat, for we have a number of women on board, and your shots would kill them. It is like the bravery of your nation to fire on women and children."

"Hold on, hold on," interrupted Folger. "What's that you say?"

"I say that the ship is full of women, and that if it were not for that, you would have had more trouble."

"Then why in the name of common sense, did ye fire on us fust?" asked the Nantucketer, in a tone of great disgust. "We ain't used to bringin' wimmin and kids into a fight, in Yankee land, mister, and I want you to unnerstand that. If ye hadn't fired at us, fust, we'd ha' spoken ye civil, and ye might have got off with a good sight less than ye're like to do, naow. Haul daown that flag, or it will be the wuss for you. I ain't got no time to palaver."

As he spoke, he made a signal to his oarsmen, and the boat began to recede from the ship; when Cole, thinking that the fire was about to open again, gave the order to haul down the flag, and as the red ensign of the merchant service came down, the Americans in the boat greeted the sight with a cheer, and Maddox muttered:

"Patience. We'll have them yet."

The flag came down, and Cole, with the same affectation of sullenness that he had shown all along, called out to Folger:

"Well, sir, we've struck! What is the next move? Are you going to take charge of the ship?"

Folger waved his hand in an indifferent way, as he answered:

"Waal, Cap, that's abaout the size of it. We air."

"Then, why in the name of all that's holy, don't you come aboard?" the Englishman cried. "Or do you want us to sail the ship for you? If you do, you'll find yourselves mistaken. It won't be long before one of our frigates will be here, and then you must look out for yourselves. Take charge of the ship as soon as you please. I have heard of your kind before. I suppose you want to go through the pockets of all the passengers, and steal their money. Go on, but remember that, if you violate the laws of warfare, you will swing at the yard-arm of one of his majesty's ships, as soon as it catches your piratical schooner."

The whalerman laughed again, without any spice of ill-humor, as he retorted:

"Waal put, Johnny; when they ketch us, is good. We ain't tryin' to be ketched, jest naow. I'd ye hear haow Cap Hull, in Old Ironsides, took one of your frigates in ten minutes, arter he got alongside, last montb! I tell yeou, that were a fine sight. Johnny Bull thought he had it all settled, and the first thing he knowed, he didn't know nothen'. Naow, Johnny, git that 'ere wreck aout of the way, and thrw all them 'ere popguns o' yourn overboard. Them's the orders, and if ye don't do it we're goin' to open fire on ye. Over with them guns, I say!"

Cole saw that he had a determined man to deal with; but he attempted to put off the surrender, by assuming an air of sullenness.

"Come aboard yourself, and do the work. You have taken the ship; do what you please with her. We are prisoners of war, and are not compelled to do anything more."

Folger turned his head, and pointed to the schooner.

"Say, Johnny," he remarked, without any irritation, "we hain't taken charge of the ship yet, and we don't intend to do no such thing, till we've got her teeth drawed. I give you jest one minute, to begin thrw them guns into the sea. You don't want them any more. We'll take keer of ye, as if ye was a bubby. If ye don't do it, my orders is to row back to the schooner, and she'll begin to fire as soon as they see me comin' back. Naow—TIME!"

And the imperturbable Yankee took out his watch, and began to count the seconds aloud, interspersed with remarks as to the probable place where the next shot would be likely to strike.

The mingled banter and earnestness had their effect, and at the end of the time, just as Folger put up his watch, the English gave the order in a loud tone:

"Open the ports, boys, and throw the guns overboard. The cowardly Yankees are afraid of a British ship, till she is unarmed."

Folger watched the operation of throwing the guns overboard in silence, till the last one, on the side where he was, had made its sullen plunge into the sea, when he made a sign to his men, and the boat was rowed to the other side of the Madras.

"Very well done, John," he remarked. "Naow fur the rest of 'em. Open the ports, and keep 'em open, so's I kin see you ain't playin' none of yer Yorkshire tricks on me. Yorkshire's good,

but old Nantucket's a darned sight smarter, any day in the week."

And the cool-headed Yankee rowed all round the ship till he had satisfied himself that the work had been done in the proper manner, and that the Indiaman was quite defenseless, save with the small arms of her crew.

Then he drew a pistol from under the seat of the boat, where it had been bidden, and fired it in the air.

The shot was evidently a signal; for the schooner, that had hitherto been lying, with her sails shaking in the breeze, every now and then gathering way enough to keep her position to windward and astern of the ship, filled her jib and came skimming down to the Madras, in a style that showed her beauty to all beholders, and revealed the fact that her long gun was loaded and trained on the Indiaman, in a way that rendered all further resistance mere madness.

Cole saw the point, and sighed heavily, as he said to Maddox:

"They are too sharp, colonel. We haven't had a chance. What a pity we didn't let them get alongside, before we opened on them."

Maddox made no answer. He was too utterly cast down to think of any consolation. His fortune, turned into gold and jewels in a style he had learned in the East, was all aboard the Madras.

He had always been suspicious of investments where the public could have any knowledge of how much money he had, and so turned all his wealth into portable things. And it was *all on board the Madras*. The face of the poor man was pale and pinched, like that of a corpse died of consumption; and his eyes had a wolfish glare as he looked at the schooner, against which his reason told him he had no defense, as she came gliding up to the side of the huge Indiaman, like a mouse assaulting an elephant, and threw her bows into the wind alongside, while a clear voice hailed:

"Ship ahoy! Send a boat, with the captain, on board the schooner. Bring your papers with you."

Cole had heard that sort of summons before; but it had always come from a man-of-war.

The commander of the privateer was evidently a person of education and refinement, from the tones of his voice, and the language he used. The English captain, seeing that resistance was in vain, made the best of a bad bargain, and did as he was ordered.

The gig was rowed across the swells to the schooner, where Cole was met by a tall, handsome young man, in a naval dress, who greeted him with the politeness of a gentleman, and said:

"I regret very much, sir, that I have had to fire into your ship; for I see that you have ladies on board; but war is a merciless mistress, and allows no compromise. Will you come into the cabin, and take some lunch, while I look over your papers? I wish it understood, before we go any further, that this schooner is a regular letter of marque, and that the rights of yourself and your passengers will be sacred. All that we shall take from you will be property of the East India Company."

Cole, who had expected a second edition of Folger, was so much taken aback by the kindness of his captor's demeanor, that he stammered and colored, as he answered in an appropriate strain.

Then he followed the captain of the privateer into the little cabin of the schooner, and their business was entered into with mutual politeness.

The interview on the deck took place so close to the Indiaman, that the conversation could be plainly heard from her decks; and the two commanders had one very interested spectator, in Kitty Clayborne, who saw, in the Yankee captain, a man, the equal of whom she had never met before.

He was tall, broad-shouldered, blonde in complexion, and the pure outline of his face resembled that of a Greek statue.

George Eaton was as handsome a man as ever trod a quarter-deck, and, under the peculiar circumstances of the meeting, the vivid imagination of the girl stirred at once, and the warm blood of her Irish mother rose up in her heart, to cry out:

"Oh, what a handsome fellow! I had no idea that Yankees could be such good-looking men."

When the apparition of the handsome Yankee officer disappeared, the girl found herself heaving a sigh so deep, that it sounded to her almost like a wail; and she felt a tug at her heart, she had never felt before. Kitty Clayborne had fallen in love, at first sight, with the Yankees she had been trained to hate.

CHAPTER X. THE AGREEMENT.

ALL thoughts of resistance to the privateer were over as far as the men of the Madras were concerned. They had run below in the usual style of sailors after the ship had struck, to secure their things as private property, and had left the Indiaman to take care of herself, in a great measure.

Therefore it was that Kitty Clayborne found herself left to the occupancy of the poop-deck, all alone, while the captain of the ship had gone aboard the privateer and the men were rummaging below.

The lady passengers were still in the cabin, trembling at the idea that the "Yankees" were coming, and the steward was scared out of his life. Colonel Maddox had gone below, like the sailors, to hide what he could of his own property.

The colonel heard what the captain of the privateer said about private property, and the words had given him great comfort.

At the same time, he had been in so many trials of his own virtue in times when the laws of war had not availed to save property from spoliation that he thought it would be safer to hide all he could.

The girl saw that the wind, which had come up with the schooner, had died away in a great measure. The ship had been reduced, before the schooner came alongside, to short canvas and bare poles on all but her mizzenmast so that she was riding head to the breeze, with the wreck of her mainmast still alongside.

The schooner lay by the side of the big ship, with her jibs down, so that she, like the ship, was riding, head to wind, her gun all ready for service.

Kitty Clayborne waited on the poop till she saw the heads of the captains of the schooner and Indiaman coming up the companionway of the Saucy Jane again.

They had not been long down-stairs when this occurred, and the girl heard the Yankee officer say:

"That will be quite satisfactory, Captain Cole. Your men will get your ship into trim for a voyage; and we, on our part, will not interfere till you have secured all you claim as private property. We are not disposed to be harsh to any person unfortunate enough to suffer capture. The schooner will wait by you, till there is no more danger of the ship suffering harm, in her present disabled condition. As soon as I see you well at work, my men shall help, by all the means in our power; but you must remember that, our vessel being small, with a crew not so strong as that of a frigate, we are obliged to use caution in taking possession. An attempt to rise, on your part, after the way in which you have been treated, would, I need not inform you, be good cause for an immediate resumption of hostilities, and the injury of the non-combatants on board, which I should regret as much as you could possibly do yourself."

Kitty did not more than half-understand this speech; but she noted the kind and handsome face of the speaker, and thought she had never known such a nice specimen of an enemy.

As the American officer closed his remarks to Cole, the captain of the Madras raised his hat to the conqueror, and said aloud:

"Sir, you have treated us with a generosity I did not expect, and I shall never forget it. If your engagements permit it, I should feel that we were greatly honored by your presence in the cabin of the Madras, at dinner—if indeed you have left us anything on board after your persistent bombardment."

The American officer bowed and responded:

"I shall have great pleasure in coming, sir, if it is only to show the ladies on your ship that we Yankees are not as black as we have been painted. At what hour do you dine?"

"Well, in fact, we must not call it dinner; for that is over; but the supper table will be spread at dark."

"I shall take pleasure in coming, sir. Good-day."

Kitty heaved a deep sigh as she saw the handsome captain turn away; and Cole came aboard a few minutes after and called all hands to the serious work of repairing damages on the ship.

As he superintended the work he told the passengers, in snatches, of the terms of the agreement he had entered into with the Yankees.

The English sailors were to put the Madras in order, and no prize crew need be sent on board to disturb the ladies, of whom the American seemed to be very careful. The captain had given his word as an English sailor and captain in the East India Company's service, to keep close to the schooner, and in case of the appearance of an English frigate, he was not to try to join her, being on parole. In this manner he was to follow the schooner to the nearest port, where she was to be put up at auction, and the captain was to have the privilege of bidding at the sale, to redeem his ship from the ownership of the enemy. On these terms the Americans agreed not to come on board the ship at all, and the passengers were to be held sacred, with all their property, in any event.

Of course these terms produced great change in the sentiment of the people on board the ship.

They had expected, after they saw the form of the rough and very plain-spoken Folger, a series of insults and the irruption of a horde of demi-savages from the schooner, who would do all they could to annoy the ladies, and perhaps kill the men if they remonstrated.

The idea that they were not to be annoyed in any way was delightful, and the idea of seeing the handsome Yankee captain, who had been espied by more than one of the ladies through the cabin windows, was equally pleasant to more than one woman on board.

The fact that the American, by his arrangement, had made a very shrewd bargain with the Englishman, was only recognized by the astute colonel, who told Cole:

"Well, if I had been you, I could have got better terms. You couldn't have given up more than the right of being recaptured. Now all the frigates in the ocean cannot be of any use to us. We have got to pay a ransom, and you can be sure it will be a big one. The ship to be sold at the nearest port? Where will that be?"

"At some port in France, wherever we can make it most readily," the captain replied, rather ruefully. "It is a pretty hard thing for us, for the Frenchmen are sure to put up the price on us; but what could I do with all these passengers? We have got off very well as it is, for there was nothing to prevent him from taking all there was of value on board the ship, and then scuttling her or setting her afire. As it is, we have a chance to put away a good deal of the company's property under our own names. We have done the best we could, under the circumstances."

Maddox frowned thoughtfully at the deck, as he said, in a reflective sort of way:

"Yes, we have a chance to do a good many things, if we have pluck enough to do them, Cole. Suppose, for the case of argument, that a British man-of-war should heave in sight at this very moment; what is there to hinder us from signaling her, and taking refuge with the flag of old England?"

Cole looked him steadily in the eye, and answered him with emphasis:

"There is only this to hinder it, colonel—I am an officer of the Honorable East India Company's service, and my commission gives me a rank with any naval officer. We sailors have a standard of honor that prevents us from breaking our word after a solemn promise. If a British ship were to heave in sight, I should be obliged to try to escape from her as much as if we had a prize crew on board; and if she were to take us back, I should be liable to the schooner for having broken my word, unless I paid the value of the ship and cargo. The agreement is one that has been made before. This ship is now a *cartel*, and sacred from capture."

Colonel Maddox frowned deeply, as he replied:

"You couldn't have given up more if you had been in a Yankee port, with the auctioneer ready to put the ship under the hammer. I suppose you know your own business, but if I see a ship that looks like an English man-of-war, I shall take the liberty to make any signals I can, and if we are taken back I shall not break my heart about it."

The only reply of the captain was:

"As you please, sir. I cannot be party to any such scheme of bad faith."

Then the honest sailor turned his back on the old adventurer—for the men who made the empire of England in India were nothing less than unscrupulous military adventurers—and attended to his duty for the rest of the afternoon, during which the sailors of the Madras were assisted by a detail of men from the Saucy Jane, who made a good impression on the English sailors by the way in which they worked, and the new "kinks," as the American sailors called them, that they showed the slower Britons in the task before them.

With the assistance of these men, the mainmast of the Madras was got up over the side once more, and, with considerable shortening, was gotten into its place by the time the sun set, when the breeze that had sustained them all day died away, and the ship and schooner lay side by side under the starlight.

The captain of the privateer came on board to supper, as he had promised to do, at about seven o'clock in the evening, when the heavier part of the work was done.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YANKEE CAPTAIN.

The coming of the American was an event on board the Madras. The ladies were full of curiosity to see what he was like, for they had only caught glimpses of him as he came on deck.

They had heard Folger in his negotiations from the cabin windows, and had agreed that he was "horrid"; but the captain had spoken so differently, as far as they had heard, that all were on the full stretch of interest and excitement to find out what sort of man he would prove at close sight.

One by one they came into the main saloon, as the steward rung the bell for supper, and it was noticeable that the ladies had put on their best attire and were ready to make a favorable impression on the enemy who had behaved so generously to them all.

Mrs. General McTavish was the first to sail in, attired in a gorgeous black satin dress, the waist close under the armpits, with a scanty skirt that displayed her ankles to advantage. Mrs. McTavish was proud of her ankles at any

time, for she was one of the ladies who do not grow stout as they grow old, and, as a young woman, she had had a very small foot.

Her gray locks were surmounted by a turban of a style that has not been seen in the world since the days of the great Napoleon, but which was very imposing at the time when it was used.

It was made of the same black satin as her dress; for the lady, being a widow, was still in mourning, though the lamented McTavish had been dead for several years, and Mrs. McTavish had abandoned regular widows' weeds.

Mrs. McTavish was the leader of society on board the ship, and had been so since she came on board. The other ladies were all relatives or wives of officers, in the Royal or Company's service, belonging to the class that is familiarly known in England as "garrison women." They talked of nothing but their husbands' regiments and subjects connected therewith, and bowed down to the widow of a general, as their natural superior.

When Mrs. McTavish spoke there was a general hush, and her words were quoted as oracles. This day she came into the cabin first of all, and took her place at the head of the table, by the captain's seat, which had been accorded her by right, from the time she came on board the Madras.

After the martial widow had taken her seat, Mrs. Colonel Strang came in, with her hair curled. She was the youngest married lady on board, and had the reputation of being a beauty, on the strength of light hair and big blue eyes. Her husband had sent her home, on account of her flirting propensities at the post where he was stationed, and was twenty years older than herself.

Then came Mrs. Brown, with her husband, an invalided captain, who had been in bed most of the voyage, and was a yellow specter of liver complaint.

The other ladies do not require any particular description, but were all of the same kind, except Kitty Clayborne, who came in last, and sat down at the table in a very subdued way, unlike her usual lively manner.

The American officer had not come in when the passengers sat down to table; but the steward was sent to tell him tea was ready. Soon after the tall form of a gentleman made its appearance at the door of the cabin, and Cole introduced his captor with the words:

"Ladies and gentlemen, Captain Eaton, of the American schooner, Saucy Jane, who has been so kind to us. I hope that you will all welcome him, and make him proper thanks, for the way in which he has treated us."

There was a general rustling of silks and satins, as the ladies rose, and they were all introduced individually to the handsome stranger, who, on his part, conducted himself with a grace and ease that showed he had been accustomed to good society.

In fact, he was the least embarrassed of the two parties to the affair, in more than one case.

When the introductions had been made, the party settled down to the evening meal, and Eaton found himself near Captain Cole, with Mrs. McTavish on one side, and Mrs. Colonel Strange on the other.

Kitty Clayborne, whom he had seen from a distance on the poop of the Madras, through the glass, wondering at the pluck of the girl, in remaining in such an exposed position, was seated next to Mrs. McTavish, at the right hand of the captain, who had managed to steal a march on the general's widow, after the introductions, and had taken the youngest, instead of the oldest lady on board, to the place of honor.

As soon as the preliminaries of eating and drinking were over, and conversation became a possibility, for the clatter of knives and forks, the general's widow said, in the languid manner that she affected with strangers on a first introduction, to give them the idea of her social superiority:

"Ah, Captain Eaton, I must confess that your appearance rather surprises me. I have seen so little of the gentlemen of your nation that I was not prepared for a man of education and refinement. Pray, are there many men of your kind in America?"

For a moment even Eaton, with all his knowledge of the world, was taken aback by the coolness of the speech.

Then he recovered his politeness to reply:

"I really hope so, Mrs. McTavish, if you mean to say that you like my style."

The widow fanned herself, for the tea had been hot and the weather was equally hot, as she answered with a sort of sneer:

"I don't know that I said that, sir. I had supposed you had a great many things to keep you back in your country, and that the people, for the most part, were engaged in hunting buffaloes and bears. Is it true that you have Indians in the streets of New York at the present time?"

Eaton could hardly control his muscles at the suggestion, but he made shift to say:

"Not in the immediate streets of the city, madam; but there are still Indians in New York State, on the different reservations. They are, however, more or less civilized."

"Indeed?" said the widow, with a lift of the eyebrows, "I had an idea that they were common in the woods that surround your cities, and that the population had to go about armed on their account."

Eaton's furtive smile, that he had bitthero managed to restrain, now broke out in spite of himself, as he replied:

"Well, madam, I am not sure about the outskirts of every city in the Union; but I can truly say that I have never seen a wild Indian anywhere near New York, and that, I believe, Boston and Philadelphia are equally exempt from savage inroads."

Then Mrs. Strang claimed his attention, with a remark that showed she wished it understood that she had been in America.

"Ah, captain, how far is it from Quebec to New York?"

"I couldn't say at the moment, madam; but I should imagine from four to five hundred miles. Were you ever in Quebec, madam?"

Mrs. Strang hesitated, and said finally:

"Well, not exactly; but my husband has a brother who was once the chief officer at Quebec, and I did not know but you might know him. I had an idea that the places were nearer than you say they are. Boston and New Orleans, I believe, are not very far from New York, are they, and is there not some place you call Baltimore, pretty close to Quebec?"

Eaton, who began to see that he was dealing with a person of limited information, and that Mrs. Strang had not the slightest idea of localities in America, (a matter in which her country-women are not very much better than Mrs. Strang to-day), answered:

"The places you mention are in the United States, madam; but they are a great distance apart. Boston and New York are not more than a week's journey by coach, but New Orleans is on the Gulf of Mexico, and it takes months to reach it overland, so that people generally go by sea. Baltimore? Well, did you never look on the map for it? It is on the coast of the State of Maryland, and— But, of course, you are laughing at me. I am giving you a lecture when I ought to be learning from your eyes when the English look at us wicked Yankees."

Mrs. Strang blushed and bridled at the tone in which he spoke, and confided to her next neighbor, after they had left the table, that Captain Eaton had lovely eyes, and that she was "almost inclined to fall in love with him at first sight, only the poor dear colonel might not like it."

The table being deserted, the passengers went on deck where they felt distinctly the hot air that brooded over the water and announced the near presence of the African coast.

The gentlemen smoked, the ladies chatted and watched the men furtively; and the handsome American was the center of eyes and ears alike, as he sat by the taffrail, chatting with the ladies, and very often letting drop remarks that showed an acquaintance with England and English people no one had expected of him, in strong contrast to the ignorance of American things, shown by all the British passengers.

The night was still calm, and the little clouds that slowly flitted across the heavens were of the character that indicates to the sailor that the morrow will bring a change of weather.

At about ten o'clock, Eaton rose, and said:

"Captain Cole, it is getting so late, I feel I ought to go to the schooner. A word with you before I take my leave."

Cole stepped to the main-deck with the American, and as soon as they had got out of earshot of the rest of the party, Eaton said:

"We shall have a shift of wind during the night and it is probable that, in the morning, it will come on to blow. You will watch the schooner, and be ruled by her course. We are in the near neighborhood of several of your cruisers, and it is necessary to be cautious. I ask you whether you are afraid the responsibility of keeping your compact with me will be too much for you, under temptation, if a ship of your own nation should heave in sight in the morning? If so, I am ready to put a prize crew aboard to remove the temptation. I think that the feelings of your lady passengers have undergone a change, and that the presence of an American crew would not be so offensive as they would have found it, a little while ago. Say what you think, sir, freely. I do not think it right to go away without offering you a chance, if you repent of your bargain."

Cole shook his head, as he said:

"If I had hesitated before, I should not do so now, sir. You have treated me with great generosity, and I could not find it in my conscience to treat you with anything but strict honor. I shall consider myself bound by your orders."

Eaton bowed at the compliment as he replied:

"Thank you for your good opinion. Now I will take my leave of the ladies."

He went back to the quarter-deck and paid his last respects to the widow of the lamented McTavish and the other notabilities of the East India Company's service, including Colonel Maddox, who had shown the greatest cordiality and liking for the young man since he had

come on board, and who had already invited him, as soon as the war was over, to come and visit the colonel and his niece at the family residence in Ireland, where the colonel promised him "all sorts of fine sport and pastime."

As they parted, the colonel said to Eaton, in a jesting tone:

"Well, Eaton, my boy, in case you find us gone in the morning, you must not be surprised. All is fair in love and war, you know, and if a British frigate heaves in sight in the dawn, we shall be taken back again, of course."

Eaton smiled evasively as he returned:

"Possibly so, sir; but that will not benefit the ship, which is now a *cartel*, and not subject to capture. However, if you are inclined to want a prize-crew put aboard the ship, and it is the desire of the passengers that I should do so, it can be arranged, even at this late date. Or, if you prefer it, we can take you on board the schooner, and so secure your own person from recapture. Your niece would, of course, like to accompany you, in that case."

He spoke jestingly, and had no expectation that the colonel would take the offer seriously; but, to his surprise, Maddox answered at once, with an eagerness that showed he meant it:

"Go aboard the schooner, and be carried to America as passengers! I should be delighted at the opportunity, sir."

Eaton felt embarrassed for a moment, but recovered himself so far as to say:

"I think you do not understand me entirely. The schooner is not a *packet*, but a *letter of marque*. Any person of your nation that goes aboard, on this cruise, will do so in the capacity of a prisoner. You do not wish that, I presume."

Colonel Maddox replied, without any hesitation:

"I should be better satisfied in the character of a prisoner than in that of a paroled man, sir. I warn you that I shall take any opportunity of escape that offers, and therefore it is but fair that you should have the trouble of my keeping, if you are not afraid of the responsibility."

Now indeed Eaton was seriously embarrassed; but there was no escape from the colonel's words, so he answered:

"As you please, sir. I shall have to secure you, in that case. You will please accompany me aboard the schooner."

Colonel Maddox bowed with the air of a man who has gained his point and the rest of the passengers looked on with astonishment.

The compact was complete.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COMING BATTLE.

The next morning dawned; with a sky covered by a thin haze; the wind hot and stifling from the east, with peculiar, furnace-like effect, coming off the coast of the great African desert.

The Madras, under short canvas, was standing to the northwest on her way to catch the westerly winds to take her into French ports; and the schooner, with a cloud of sail spread, was moving to and fro, trying to accommodate her pace to that of her slower consort, and to explore the largest space of sea, with a view of discovering any enemy that might be visible.

The morning wore on; the wind increased till it blew a smart "capful," as the sailors call it; the ship began to move through the water with greater rapidity, while the schooner was obliged to reduce her canvas to her lower sails, and to take a reef in the mainsail.

On the quarter-deck of the Saucy Jane, besides Eaton, who was scanning the horizon with a glass, Colonel Maddox paced the deck like a caged tiger, ever and anon casting glances to the west, from which he expected every moment to see the form of a British man-of-war heave into sight.

The colonel had come aboard, the night before, with his niece, who declined to part from him under any circumstances, and the small cabin of the schooner, by their presence, had been uncomfortably crowded, though the officers of the little craft were only three in number.

Colonel Maddox was quite cheerful, with all his anxiety, and occasionally tried to make jokes about the probable fate of the schooner and her captures.

"It won't do, Eaton, my boy," he said at last, when the day had grown to noon, and still no sail disturbed the serenity of the blue sea.

"They may not come to-day or to-morrow, but come they must before you can take your prize into any port; and it is mere folly to think that your little schooner can ever escape the cruisers of his majesty. You made a very sharp bargain with Cole, I admit; but it won't save you, and you know it. We are getting closer and closer, every day, into the track of the fleets that are always under convoy, and where will you be if you come across them?"

Eaton took down the glass from his eye, and replied, with a slight smile:

"Where shall I be? Why, in a very good position to take another prize from the convoy. My dear colonel, I do not blame you for your anxiety to escape. I should be the same myself, if I had been taken prisoner; but you must

remember that, if you see a ship, it by no means follows that it is a *British* frigate. We have a few ships of *our own* in this sea."

The colonel uttered a snort of contempt.

"Ships of *your own*!" he echoed. "Why, man alive, you don't imagine that there are any of *your* ships at sea now? Why, if one of them were to show her nose where *his majesty's* ships cruise, she would be taken so quick it would surprise you."

Eaton laughed.

"Are you aware that I saw the Constitution take one of *your* frigates, a month ago, after a ten minutes' action?"

Maddox smiled derisively.

"Oh yes, I heard you say that, several times, but you must pardon me for saying that I am not compelled to believe the word of an enemy in time of war. Ordinary rules do not apply. You are at liberty to say what you please, and I am not obliged to believe you, till the war is over. When I see, with my own eyes, an American frigate take a British ship of anything like equal force, I will acknowledge I have underrated you Yankees."

Just at that moment, the lookout at the foremast-head of the *Saucy Jane* shouted down on deck:

"SAIL HO!"

The captain had his glass up in a minute, calling back:

"Whereaway? Whereaway?"

"Off to leeward, sir, and only just lifting. Can't see what it is, yet; but think it is a large ship."

The captain directed his glass to the spot indicated, but failed to see anything, and was obliged to climb up the mast and get to the cross-trees beside the sailor, before he located the sail. As soon as he had fixed it in the glass, he saw that it was a ship of considerable size. Her sails, though below the horizon, were broad, and covered a large comparative space.

He waited patiently till that part of the stranger's canvas that lies below the topgallant-roast began to show above the sky line, and then descended on deck, to say to Maddox, with an air of conviction:

"Colonel, you said you would like to see a Yankee frigate. You shall see one, in about half an hour. The sail in sight is an American ship, beyond a doubt."

Maddox stared.

"How do you know that, sir, when she is not yet visible from the deck?"

Eaton pointed over to the spot where he had been looking.

"Because I recognized the shape of her topgallantsails, if you want to know. The ship in sight is the Yankee frigate *United States*, under the command of Captain Decatur, and if one of *your* ships comes into sight at the same time, you may have the pleasure of seeing it taken, in the same style as the *Guerriere*."

Maddox looked as if he thought Eaton was jesting with him; but he saw the sail himself from the deck, a little later, and it required no long acquaintance with the sea to find out, inside of half an hour, that the schooner was seeking a meeting with the strange sail; for she steered straight toward her, and the sails of the ship were very soon visible from the deck, so they could see, with the naked eye, she was a frigate.

Even Maddox saw that, from the trimness of her spars, and the way in which her sails were arranged.

She was close-hauled to the easterly wind, steering due south, and had her topgallant-yards across, with the royals on deck, showing the long, naked outline of upper spars that distinguishes a man-of-war from a merchantman, any day in the week.

She was still a great distance off, when the lookout, at the mast-head of the *Saucy Jane*, again roared down:

"SAIL HO! DEAD ASTERN!!!"

The colonel started violently, and ejaculated:

"Bless my soul, what's the matter to-day? All the sails are coming at once. And Sunday, of all days in the week."

The captain of the privateer immediately ascended the mast again, to inspect the coming sail, astern, and saw she was a ship of large size, coming, with the wind on her quarter, toward them, and having the appearance of a frigate.

The narrowness of her upper sails, in comparison with those of the *United States* (as he had pronounced the other ship to be) satisfied him she was English. Eaton, therefore, came down on deck and gave orders to close in with the prize, which he very soon after spoke.

The *Madras* was overhauled; her captain put his head over the side in answer to the hail; and received his orders to "to make all the sail he could and stand off to the northeast" to get into the neighborhood of the Portuguese colonies of the Azores, in order to run in there if the British ship should chase her.

He obeyed, and the schooner then shortened sail herself to wait the approach of the two frigates, with the intention on the part of her captain, of seeing the affair.

There was a spice of taunt on his part, as far as concerned Maddox in this action. He had already seen, through the glass, that the English

ship was one of the same general class as the *Guerriere* had been; and he knew that there could be but one issue to a fight between her and the American ship, which was of the same rate as the *Constitution*.

Maddox was full of eagerness to see the fight, and very confident of the result. He even called down the companionway to his niece, who had kept her cabin all the morning, to "come up and see what he had to show her," and, as soon as the girl came on deck, he pointed out the sails, now visible from the deck, and told her:

"Now, Kitty, my dear, we shall see what these Yankees can do in the way of fighting, when the adversary is not a helpless merchantman. That ship, over there to leeward, is a Yankee frigate, and the other, astern, is one of his majesty's ships. There is going to be a battle very soon, and may the best man win—the man being, of course, an *Englishman*."

Kitty Clayborne looked round her, with the keen love of the sea she had learned in the long voyage from India. She saw the white sails on the blue surface, and thought she had never before appreciated the full beauty of the ocean.

The waves were glittering in the rays of a hot sun, (for the ships were very near the tropics, and the wind from Africa made the sun seem hotter); the flying fish were leaping as usual, and the shoals of albicores were chasing them, with all the voracity that makes the ocean a world of mutual slaughter.

In the distance, the sails of the ships, that were approaching the schooner and the Indianaman, were growing more and more distinct, as they emerged from behind the curve of the earth, and the American frigate was already within the ken of the naked eye, so that Kitty could see that she was a very handsome ship.

The *Madras*, with her yellowish sails and clumsy outlines, looked like a cart-horse among racers, beside the trim schooner and frigates, coming into plainer view every moment.

The girl's glance took in all the scene; then turned to the form of Eaton, which was near by her, and she said timidly, in a way unusual with the lively Kitty:

"Mr. Eaton, will there be any danger to us, if those ships begin to fight?"

Eaton shook his head reassuringly, as he answered:

"Not in the slightest degree. As far as the schooner is concerned, she can sail away from any ship in sight, and the Indianaman is safe from recapture under the terms of my agreement with Captain Cole. Your uncle, if he had remained on board, might have claimed that he was not included in the terms of the agreement, and so been taken to England; but as it is, I am obliged to say that you are both likely to stay my prisoners, for an unlimited time."

It was a strange feeling that caused Kitty Clayborne to smile to herself, as if she had no very dull thoughts at the idea of being a prisoner to the handsome Yankee.

She made no direct answer to him, however, but presently said:

"I am sure you have been very kind to us, Mr. Eaton, since we have been on board the schooner. I have not felt that we were prisoners at all. What do you mean to do with us, when we get to America, in case you still consider us, prisoners?"

Eaton laughed, as he answered, in a confidential way:

"Between you and me, Miss Clayborne, you are not a prisoner at all. I have only used the term for the sake of making your uncle feel that he will not be allowed to make any signals to British ships, which may happen to be in sight. If I had left him on board the *Madras*, he might have over-persuaded Captain Cole, to try and take his ship under the guns of yonder frigate, and so violate his parole, and compel me to sink the next British ship I take, in the expectation that all Britons are liable to act in bad faith. As it is, you are safe from the dangers of battle, and will have an opportunity to see what a naval battle is like, without any personal peril to yourself. If you are afraid to look on, I will shape the course of the schooner away, so that you may not be shocked."

"But the people of the *Madras*; what will become of them?" asked Kitty nervously, seeing that her uncle's attention was wholly bent on the position of the two strange sails, and that he was not attending to her at all. "I hope they will not get hurt."

"They will not, if they obey my orders. They have only to make the best of their way out of this fight, and the frigates will give them a wide berth. The Yankees won't want to interfere, and the Englishman, over yonder, is going to have all he can attend to before this day is done."

Here Colonel Maddox, who had been peering through Eaton's glass at the distant ships, came up to say:

"Eaton, my boy, that English frigate is going to lick your Yankee, all to pieces, in half an hour. You mark my words. I am no sailor; but I have seen a good deal of war on land, and I know from the way that fellow is coming on, that he means business."

"I hope he does, colonel. It will not make any great difference to you, which way the bat-

tle terminates; for, in any event, this schooner is safe from capture."

"Safe from capture! How so?" asked the old soldier, in some surprise. "You cannot pretend that she's a cartel, too!"

"Oh, no; but who is going to catch her, colonel? You forget that this schooner is one of the swiftest vessels of her kind, and that this wind is just the thing to exhibit her qualities to the best advantage. We have a smooth sea, so that she does not toss about, as she would if the sea had lasted longer. We are able to carry most of our sails, and the way of the vessel is now about ten knots an hour. The American frigate, that is approaching, is also a swift ship, though not anything like the schooner; and the English frigate is slower than the American, as you can see from the rate at which they are nearing the schooner respectively. The English ship is coming down, every sail set, as you see, the wind on her quarter—the best possible point for a square-rigged ship—while the Yankee has only his topgallantsails set, his royals on deck. The American is close-hauled, and yet he is making better way than the Englishman. That does not look well for Johnny Bull, you admit?"

"Not if you mean that he cannot catch the Yankee," retorted the colonel, "If Brother Jonathan is going to run away, we are all right, for you don't doubt the British frigate will catch the *Madras*, and in that case she will treat your cartel with as much respect as it is entitled to under the laws of war, and no more."

Eaton laughed, as he replied:

"But I don't mean anything of the sort, colonel! I mean that the English frigate is going to be taken, and the Yankee is going to do it before our eyes, in a very short time. Look at her now. Is she not a ship for any nation to be proud of, as she sails?"

As he spoke, the frigate to leeward fired a gun, and showed the Stars and Stripes to the wind, yawning slightly from her course to display them to the schooner and the Indianaman.

The signal was answered from the schooner, and a series of flags made their appearance at the mast-head of the ship-of-war, which Eaton interpreted into a request for the name of the other ship coming down with the wind.

The *Saucy Jane* stood toward the frigate all the time she was trying to answer the signals; and, by the time the last had been deciphered, the two vessels were within hailing distance, when the captain of the ship-of-war shouted over the side, as she backed her maintopsail to the mast, to keep company with the little schooner:

"I thought you were a Yank, after all, my friend. No one else would be out here. This is the frigate *United States*, and I am Captain Decatur. Who is the captain of the schooner?"

A flush passed over Eaton's face as he looked up at the commander of the frigate. He and Decatur had been midshipmen on the old Constitution, in the days when she had humbled the power of the Bey of Tripoli and the Dey of Algiers.

He knew that Decatur had expressed very strong opinions on the subject of an event in Eaton's life which had driven him from the society of men of his own class, till the chances of war had taken the stain from his reputation and allowed his restoration to the navy.

He hesitated a moment, and then answered:

"My name is Eaton, Captain Decatur, and I command the *Saucy Jane*, privateer. I have the honor to wish you a very good-morning, and to hope you will be more successful in the contest with the English frigate, now approaching, than I was in a certain affair you remember, on the *Chesapeake*."

He could see the face of Decatur as he spoke, and noticed that it grew darker; for the fiery little officer had expressed very decided opinions on the subject of the *Chesapeake*—opinions that were to cost him his life, at a date not far distant.

Decatur drew himself up and said stiffly:

"Very glad to see you have done what your old commander ought to do, sir. That affair is a sting to the pride of every American, and of all the men on that ill-fated day who ought to have been shot, I am glad to hope that you are not one. I see that the government have restored you to the navy, and that you have resigned. I think you were wise to do so. Our people ought never to trust any man who was once on an American ship, that surrendered without firing a gun. I have heard that you were one of the men who were treated with injustice and I hope it is so; but you must not expect me to recognize you as an old friend, till you have shown that you are not of the same stock as Barron."

The last word pronounced with indescribable bitterness.

Eaton drew himself up in his turn, and answered stiffly:

"I am asking no favors of any man in the navy at present, Captain Decatur. I have left it forever, and have taken to privateering. My name may not be in the Gazette so often as yours; but, if I do my duty to my owners, I shall not be blamed, I hope. The ship you see

to windward is my prize, the Indiaman Madras, sixteen guns, with a valuable cargo on board; and I am going to take her into a French port, to dispose of her to the best advantage."

Decatur stared as he said:

"A French port! Why, that will be an impossibility. The English cruisers are all round the French ports, and there is no more chance of your getting in than of flying to the moon. You had better put into Fayal, and sell your prize there."

The conversation was brought to a sudden close by the parting of the two vessels, as they filled their sails, which had been shaking, as the helmsmen threw them up into the wind.

The frigate went off again, and the schooner was held to her course in the direction of the Madras, which ship was going off as hard as she could be driven by the aid of all her sails.

As soon as the schooner had attained the distance of about half a mile astern of the United States, Eaton said to his fair prisoner, Kitty Clayborne:

"Now, Miss Clayborne, you will have the opportunity of seeing a real battle at last. The little fight that you saw the other day was only a skirmish."

Kitty laughed, but a slight shudder crossed her frame as she repeated to herself:

"Only a skirmish! If that was a skirmish, what must a battle be?"

"A very terrible thing, Miss Clayborne; but if you would like to escape the sight, I can easily set the course of the schooner away."

What the reason was that caused Kitty to blush at this speech, is hard to find; but she made shift to say, in a low tone:

"Would you do that much for me, when it may be your duty to stay by your countrymen in the battle?"

"Why not? This schooner does not belong to any regular navy, and goes where her captain pleases. If I wish to help the frigate, I can do it; but I am not disposed that way."

"And why not?" asked Kitty, rather surprised.

Eaton frowned, as he looked at the frigate.

"On board that ship," he said; "sails a man who was on the same ship as myself when we were boys. I fell into misfortune, at a later date, and he has never forgiven me for that misfortune. Let him try what it is to fight an English ship alone. I am not going to help him. Some day he may know what it is to have to surrender to the English himself, and then he may remember what he said to me, and of my captain."

The girl saw that something in the past history of her captor had excited him greatly, and said no more; but she looked wistfully at the frigate, which was still rapidly closing with the stranger.

In a sort of half-sigh, she murmured:

"Poor fellows! what a sight it will be! I know it is very unladylike, captain, but I should really like to see a battle."

Eaton turned to the man at the wheel and ordered him to luff.

The schooner then stood off to the eastward, eating her way up into the wind, so as to keep the weather-gage.

The English frigate was now getting so close they could see, from the deck of the privateer, that she was a large ship and mounted a great many guns.

As she raised her topsails over the curve of the sea she showed a great breadth of canvas below, with a very narrow head to her upper sails and the appearance of having been, like the Guerriere, a French prize. She was sending down her lighter spars and sails as she advanced, and had already stripped to her three topsails, spanker and jib, with her courses hanging in the brails.

As the Yankee frigate went toward her, she also was shortening sail, the object in both cases being to lessen the strain on the spars, in case of a wound, so that the masts might have a chance of standing. The bad effect of going into action without stripping had been exemplified in the case of the unlucky Madras, in Kitty's sight, the day before, when that ship's mast had come down over the side in the midst of a fight, deciding the battle against her, all on account of carrying too much sail on a wounded spar.

As the ships neared each other, the American fired a gun to windward and threw out her flag, which was instantly answered by the report of another gun from the English ship and the appearance of the red ensign of England at the mizzen-peak of the frigate on the windward side.

"What does that mean?" inquired Kitty curiously. "Neither seemed to hit the other."

"They did not mean to aim at each other, Miss Clayborne. It was a mere defiance on both sides—a sort of com-on-if-you-dare shot. Now we shall see the fun, in a very short time."

Then the two ships shaped their courses toward each other, with an earnestness about which there was no mistake, and the schooner kept within gunshot of the United States, ready to take part in the fight if there seemed to be any chance of the American ship getting the worst of the battle.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECOND FRIGATE.

THE scene that ensued from the deck of the schooner was one of great beauty and excitement.

The Saucy Jane was to windward of all the ships, eating her way further and further every minute to the position of vantage, from whence it would be impossible to catch her if any one were disposed to do so.

The whole four vessels—the two frigates, the Indiaman and the privateer—were out of sight of land, though the heat of the wind showed that they were by no means outside of its influence.

It was one of those days when the sea seems on fire, such is the brightness of the sun and the glitter of every wave that catches the light.

There was just enough wind, hot as it was, to curl the surface of the ocean into an infinite of little waves, tipped with white foam, sparkling like a sea of diamonds.

The heat was intense in spite of the wind, which had reduced the schooner to taking down her topsails. The sailors of the Saucy Jane had doffed their upper clothing and were walking about the deck, their brawny chests exposed to view, their feet bare; while the captain and officers, more subject to the restraints of decency, owing to the presence of the lady passenger, had come out in white duck, and were trying to keep cool as best they could under the circumstances.

The position of the three ships was that of a triangle, of which the Indiaman, to leeward of the whole, was the apex.

The schooner was between the two frigates, about midway; the United States, close-hauled, standing due south; while the English ship was coming down with the east wind on her starboard quarter, heading to the northwest to meet the American.

At the moment the Saucy Jane attained the weather-gage, so decidedly there was no further danger of any one overhauling her, the two frigates were about a half-mile from each other, and the action began without any preliminaries, by the English ship firing her whole broadside at the American at full distance.

Kitty Clayborne saw the succession of flashes coming from the side of the English ship, and held her breath as the shot went skipping over the sea, plainly visible, from the deck of the schooner, in the lines of spray they roused on their passage.

Kitty, with all her ignorance of the conditions of naval warfare, had had a little experience in the fight she had witnessed from the Madras, when that ship had been the recipient of the attentions of the schooner, the day before.

She had realized on that day that all the shots that are fired in a duel at sea do not hit, and she had grown used to watching whether they struck or not.

On this occasion she saw that many shot of the British ship fell into the sea, and knew, as well as if she had been told, that they were lost.

A few struck the American frigate, but did not seem to do any great damage, for the stately ship sailed on as proudly as ever, and not a spar fell out of its place on her tall symmetry of mast and yard.

The American ship held on without any reply for a few seconds after the English broadside had been delivered, and fell off a little from the wind to a position at right angles to that at which she had received the shots.

Then the flashes of her guns answered those of the Briton, and the thunder of the reports came driving over the sea, deadened by the distance into a muffled sound, while the passage of the shot could be distinctly traced over the waves by the lines of spray they raised.

Kitty, with all her greenness at sea, exclaimed:

"Why, uncle, look! They go much further than the English ship's shots. Not one has fallen into the water, and see! see how they have cut up the poor thing!"

It was a fact. The shot of the American seemed to strike the English ship, almost all of them. A few flew past her, and very nearly struck the schooner, which was in the line of fire; so that Eaton took an early opportunity to get out of the line. The English ship was seen to be cut up by that broadside to an extent that greatly exceeded the damage done her antagonist. The splinters flew from her hull in more than one place, and her sails appeared to be full of holes, while the United States sailed on with her canvas still capable of being used, without material injury.

Then the American ship "wore" her head round—that is, let it fall off from the wind still more, till she came up again on the other tack—executing a graceful circle to leeward.

This movement brought her head on the same tack as that of the English frigate, and the Briton followed her example at once, so as to bring her head to the south, while the American's bows pointed to the north. In this position both ships delivered their other broadsides, with very similar results to the first exchange,

and the further fact, in favor of the American ship, that she was the first to deliver her fire as she came up to the wind, and by that means managed to get a raking line on the Briton for nearly half a minute, before the English guns could be brought to bear on her adversary.

No sooner had this result been reached, than the Yankee frigate wore round a second time, and came to the south, on her original course, so that the two ships were side by side, at the interval of about three-quarters of a mile, at which distance they ran on, delivering their deadly broadsides, till even the girl on the deck of the schooner, who had no idea of what terrible destruction was being accomplished, could not help seeing that something was going on which would soon destroy one or other of the ships.

The Saucy Jane ran on, abeam of the United States, keeping well to the windward, and saw the whole fight without any danger to her passengers, after the first shots. The two frigates went on firing at each other, in the relentless style that marks a duel to the death between men of the English race, whether born in England or America. The effects were apparent in about half an hour, when both ships had their sails in holes, and the mizzen-topgallantmast of the American ship was shot away, so that it looked as if she was actually getting the worst of it, causing Colonel Maddox to cry out:

"Aha, Mr. Yankee, that's a good, old-fashioned English shot for you! How do you like that?"

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when the mizzenmast of the British frigate fell over the side into the water, shot away just above the deck, and Eaton remarked quietly:

"Our friend liked it so well, colonel, that he thought he would be justified in bettering it. A mizzenmast is better than a mizzen-topgallant-mast, any day; isn't it?"

Maddox made no answer, partly because he was too much mortified with the sight, partly because he was too much engaged, to find time to speak to any one. He kept watching the ships with an intentness that showed his interest, and his expression was all the time alternating between hope and fear.

Meantime the two frigates were drawing nearer and nearer to each other; the fire growing more destructive as they closed the gap between them, the English ship suffering the most.

As her mizzenmast fell, she was less than a quarter of a mile from the United States, and immediately set her foresail, that had hitherto been hanging in the brails, to close with the ship that had already done her so much damage.

Decatur's ship, seeming nowise loth to oblige the stranger, followed her example by setting her fore and mainsails, under which canvas she rapidly closed with the English frigate, firing with a deadly accuracy of aim that rendered the battle more hopeless at every shot. Colonel Maddox was so much interested and excited at the sight, that he burst out, every now and then, into ejaculations of alternate hope and despair, as he saw the varying fortunes of the duel. The English ship was getting the worst of it so fast, he had no heart to say anything but:

"Oh, look at that now! What a shot! Poor fellows, she carries too many guns for them. God grant she may get close enough to board. Cold steel, boys! Cold steel! That is the work for you. It is your only chance."

The two frigates had got so close to each other now that the fore-course of the Englishman was all in ribbons, while the sails of the United States were full of holes, distributed around in a way that did not so much impair her sailing powers, and showing the poorer gunnery of the English sailors.

At last they got within pistol-shot, and the English ship lost, in the last three minutes, both her topmasts, that had been left when she started to close. They hung over the side in a helpless way, that made her look like a wreck, and the foremast began to totter, showing that only the ragged state of the fore-course kept it from going over the side and the ship from becoming as total a wreck as the Guerriere had been made in her action with the Constitution.

As they closed, moreover, it was seen that the American ship was lying still, so as to secure the utmost rapidity and precision of fire. She had backed her maintopsail to the mast, so as to decrease her way, and as the British ship at last came within pistol shot, with the evident intention of trying the last resort of desperation at sea, in the shape of boarding, the United States filled her topsail and shot away, in a manner that drew down from Maddox the smothered exclamation:

"I thought so! He has had enough of it! He is running away."

Eaton heard him and had opened his lips to speak, when the action of the ship herself saved him from the necessity of saying a word.

The American frigate, after filling her topsail, glided a head for a few cable-lengths, and then moved up across the wake of the unhappy British ship now drifting down the wind, an almost perfect wreck, till she had secured a

position right across her stern, when the two vessels were less than a cable-length apart.

And then, while the face of Colonel Maddox was still wearing its aspect of intense anxiety, a cheer burst out from the throats of the men of the Saucy Jane, as they saw the flag of old England which had been borne so gallantly in the unequal fight, come down from the main rigging of the poor Britisher, while the United States dropped a boat from her side to take possession of the prize.

Eaton said nothing to add to the humiliation of his passenger, the colonel. For a moment, in spite of the unequivocal nature of the triumph that he had witnessed, he felt for the old soldier.

The colonel's face was the picture of despair and incredulous shame, as he muttered:

"Struck! STRUCK! By Heavens, is it possible?"

Then he put the glass to his eye, to see if there might not be some hope his vision had deceived him.

Alas! The surrender of the British frigate was only too plain!

She had no flag flying for the space of about five minutes, and the next thing the colonel saw was the American flag, hoisted on the stump of the captured ship's mainmast, with the British ensign underneath it.

Poor Maddox uttered a hollow groan, and went down to the cabin of the schooner, too much overcome to say a word; his face as pale as that of a corpse.

He had no refuge from the conviction that he had seen a British frigate captured before his eyes by an American ship, with a completeness that left no loophole on which to hang an excuse.

As for Kitty Clayborne, the face of that young lady was a study. She did not seem to know whether to be glad or sorry for what she had seen, and did not fully understand what had taken place.

"What do they mean by stopping the shooting?" she asked, with perfect innocence, of Eaton. "Will they begin again soon, or is the battle over?"

"The battle is over, Miss Clayborne," said the American, gravely. "The English ship has hauled down her flag, in token of submission to the other ship, and there will be no more fighting to-day, unless another ship heaves in sight, which is not probable."

"Why not?" asked she, in the same innocent way.

"Because we should have seen the sails somewhere in sight before this. Any ship that bears a cannonading like that just finished, would be sure to sail toward it, and she would be in sight by this time if she had been within hearing. The United States has captured that ship, and the only question is whether she will be able to take her into port."

"Would there be any difficulty in that?"

"Yes, for this reason: your nation has a number of friends in all parts of the world, and can take her prizes into any port. We Yankees are not so fortunate, for we are as yet a small nation, with a very small population. That is why I had to make the agreement I did with Captain Cole, and why I have been so careful not to expose the schooner to anything that might make it necessary to go into port to refit. We have to get rid of our prizes in the best way we can, and that is why I must go to France instead of the Portuguese Islands, which are the nearest. I have no security that, if I go there, I may not have to lose my prizes altogether."

Here the voice of Colonel Maddox was heard from the cabin, calling:

"Kate, Kate, where are you, my child? I want to speak to you."

Kitty went down in obedience to the call, and found the veteran on a sofa, with his hands to his head, as if he were sick.

The only thing he said as she came down, was:

"Oh, Kate, what is going to become of poor old England, when she lets such men as that captain sail the seas under her flag? Nelson is dead, and all the English fleet seems to have died with him. If I had commanded that ship I would have sunk her or blown her up. Anything rather than strike my flag to a Yankee."

To the surprise of the old soldier, the girl said to him, with an accent that he had never heard from her before:

"I think, uncle, that it is not fair to call the Americans names, when we have seen them beat our own people in the way we have. I am sure you have no cause to complain of the treatment you have received from the Americans."

For a moment the colonel sat aghast at the reply, and then he burst into a torrent of oaths, and accused the girl of being a "renegade to her country," in a way that showed he was very angry with her for the first time in Kitty Clayborne's life.

CHAPTER XIV.

DECATUR AT HOME.

As soon as the battle was fairly over between the two frigates, the schooner ran down to the side of the United States, and hailed her, to

know whether she needed any assistance, to secure her prize, or to send word to any port as to the capture. Eaton, to his surprise, was greeted, as his vessel came up, by the voice of Decatur himself, who looked over the side of the frigate and said:

"Eaton, old fellow, I was cross to you this morning, and I should like you to come on board and dine with me, as soon as dinner is ready. I want to talk to you."

For a moment the captain of the Saucy Jane was taken aback; but he had the advantage over others that he had once known Decatur well, and knew that he was a hot-tempered and impetuous man, who often made mistakes which no one was quicker to acknowledge in his cooler moments. For a few seconds he hesitated, and then answered:

"If you are not ashamed to dine with a privateer, I shall be much honored, sir; but it must be understood, before I go on board the frigate, that I do not admit what you said about my old commanding officer, Captain B. I am bound to fight for him, and maintain, at all times, that he was, in common with myself, a victim of misfortune, and in no sense what you have called him."

Decatur frowned and smiled as he listened, but answered:

"Well, well, we can agree to disagree. Come on board as soon as you can. We shall have the captain of the Macedonian to dinner."

Then, for the first time, Eaton learned the name of the ship that had been taken, in such handsome style, and was glad to accept the invitation.

The schooner was hove to beside the United States, whose people were already hard at work repairing damages.

As Eaton got into his boat to go on board the frigate, he was in a position to see the full extent of what had been done to the poor Macedonian. He ordered his men to row past the stern of the captured ship, and was fairly astounded at the amount of injury she had received. Her hull was all dotted with holes. The shot had gone through both sides in most instances, and had knocked her into a state of wreck, as amazing as the fact that the American frigate had received but little damage.

The upper deck of the Macedonian was covered with the debris of the fight, in the shape of fallen spars, and huge splinters of her bulwarks. In many cases her ports had been knocked into one by the shot of the American, and she had not a mast standing, except the stump.

Her men, assisted by the crew of the Yankee frigate, were at work, in a sullen, despairing sort of way, to try and get her in order to sail again; but it was plain to the young privateer, man that the prize would have a hard time getting into port, if it came on to blow to any extent.

As he ascended the side of the United States, he saw that the Yankee ship was all ready to go into action again, for her lost mizzen-top-gallantmast had been already replaced by a new spar, and the hull of the United States was almost intact.

The American ship was the larger of the two; but not so much as to make the idea of a contest between them out of the question. The United States was higher out of the water, and carried a few more guns than the Macedonian, but the great disparity between the two lay in the weight of metal. The Macedonian carried long eighteen-pounders on her gun-deck, while the United States was armed with long twenty-fours.

But, as the young officer looked from the hight of the American, down on the decks of the Macedonian, he saw that the cause of the defeat had not laid in the superiority of metal alone. The British frigate was still strewn with the bodies of nearly fifty men, in all stages of wounds and mangled death. Of a crew of three hundred men, no less than a hundred and three had been killed and wounded, while the total loss of the United States had been only twelve, of whom seven had been wounded.

Decatur saw Eaton looking at the prize, and came up to shake him by the hand, with the observation:

"Yes, Eaton, it is all true. They fought as well as men could fight; but they didn't know how to shoot with our men, and we hit them three times to their once. Hush, their captain is on board and I want to introduce you to him. Come this way."

Eaton was taken aft, and saw there a man of pleasant mien, who had on his face the expression of one who has had his eyes opened in a way he had not expected. The privateer was introduced to him formally as:

"Captain Carden of the Macedonian, thirty-eight. He fought his ship like a man; but we were too many guns for him, that is all. The captain says that he cannot complain, now that it is all over."

Carden smiled rather ruefully as he answered the introduction of the American:

"I do not know I said exactly I could not complain captain; but it is no use, and if the fortune of war has thrown me into your power, I am glad it is a man of my own race who has beaten me, and not a Frenchman. I believe if

it had been a Frenchman, I should have blown up the ship, rather than strike as I did."

Eaton shook hands with him, to remark:

"Have I not seen you somewhere before, Captain Carden, before you attained your present rank. Were you not once on the *Leopard*?"

Carden colored slightly, as he replied:

"I was, sir, and I think that, now you speak of it, I remember your face too. You were one of the lieutenants on the *Chesapeake*, at the time we surprised her, off the coast of your country."

Eaton bowed coldly.

"The same, sir. You may remember some of the incidents of that day when you took our ship. Can you tell the commodore here, whether or not a shot was fired by any one on board the *Chesapeake*, and who fired it?"

Carden nodded, as he replied:

"Certainly I can. There was but one shot fired, and I saw the men who fired it. It was just before the ship struck. We were all at quarters, and had noticed that your people had not been able to get a single gun to go off. Of course we had the advantage of you, and we had to take it, 'while it was hot' as they say. We had fired into you for near half an hour, and there had been no reply, while we were cutting you to pieces as fast as we pleased. It was just as we were beginning to think we should have to sink you, that a shot was fired by an officer, who brought a coal of fire from the cook's galley, and must have burned his fingers to the bone in so doing. The gun went off, but did not hit the ship. It passed between our masts, and after that, the captain of our ship shouted to haul down the flag."

"Did you ever see that officer after, sir?" asked Eaton, earnestly.

Carden looked at him as earnestly as himself, and burst out:

"Why, it must be the same man, after all. What name did you say—not Eaton? Why, of course, my dear fellow, you must remember me. And what a change of fortune, too! War is a very fickle mistress, gentlemen, and I don't wonder that the ancients offered sacrifices to Bellona, and all the rest of the gods, before going into battle. Mr. Eaton, you have a right to crow over me now. The last time we met, the Lion had the upper hand, and now it is the Eagle. What do you think of it, Commodore Decatur?"

Decatur seemed to be thinking, and it was in a very thoughtful way that he answered:

"I am thinking that, if I had known Eaton fired that shot, I should not have been so harsh in my judgment of him. But we Yankees are very peculiar people, as you will find out some day, Captain Carden, and we hate to give up, beaten. That affair of the *Chesapeake* was a sting in my side till to-day. Hereafter I shall be able to say that the fortune of war has changed, and Eaton has had his revenge, in which I am very happy to participate."

Eaton turned to his old comrade to ask:

"How long have you been at sea, Decatur?"

"Only about a month. We came out of New York, on the twelfth of October."

"Then you had heard of the way Old Ironsides did her duty?"

Decatur's eyes flashed as he said:

"Ay, ay, Eaton, the old barky knows how to take care of herself; don't she? What do you think of it, Captain Carden?"

The English captain looked puzzled, as he asked:

"What is it, sir? I don't quite understand."

"How long have you been at sea?" asked Eaton.

"About two months, sir. I was on the West India station for awhile; but was sent home after the convoys, in case any of your cruisers should come across them."

"Then you have not heard of the capture of the *Guerriere*?"

Carden started sharply.

"The *Guerriere*! Not *Gus Dacres's*, ship surely? Why, who took her? Did you say so? Are you sure? Did you, either of you, see it?"

Eaton replied:

"I had that honor, sir. She was taken by the Constitution, after ten minutes' close action, and had to be sunk, on account of the shots she had received between wind and water."

Carden sighed heavily as he said:

"Well, well, it was the fortune of war, and it could not be helped."

Then he turned his head toward the ship he had lost, and continued, in the same mournful way:

"I have nothing to complain of, gentlemen. The ship that could make *Gus Dacres* take down his flag, must have been handled and fought by a man who knew his business. How large a ship is this *Old Ironsides*, that you speak of?"

"She is the Constitution, a sister ship to this one, and carries the same armament," said Decatur. "It was not a fair match between us. I cut you to pieces without giving you a chance to say a word."

Carden smiled rather ruefully.

"You are very kind to say it, I am sure; but I know what was the matter with us and you, and the whole secret was that, our men have not learned to shoot straight yet. It is all very

The Three Frigates.

well when we meet a Frenchman, but I am afraid that the French have spoiled us for every one else."

Then the captain of the English ship added:

"But it is no use crying over spilt milk, so we had better say no more about it. You have taken this ship fairly, and I am the last man to deny it."

Decatur, with the tact of a generous man, saw that his captive was getting to feel his position keenly; so he led the way down to dinner, and in a little while more, the wine and good fare made the British officer forget his cares, and the trio made shift to pass a very pleasant evening.

When the captain of the Saucy Jane went back to his schooner that night, he had seen the English captain to bed in Decatur's cabin, and Carden had drank so much good Kentucky whisky, from the stores of the United States, that he was ready to swear the Yankees were the best fellows in the world, and that he loved them, every one, as he loved his own people at home.

CHAPTER XV.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.

Two weeks later, the British frigate, Bellona, one of the blockading squadron before the French port of Brest, on the outside line, was "standing off and on," under her topsails and spanker, waiting for prizes, when her lookout announced a sail in sight, to the southwest, and in a few moments, repeated the news, with the addition that two sails were coming in; one of them a ship, the other a schooner.

The frigate was at once astir with men, all her sails spread to the wind, as she stood out of the line of blockaders, to speak the strangers.

It was well known that any vessels coming in sight of the port, at that period of the war, must be blockade runners.

Within half an hour, the Bellona had sighted the two strangers from the deck, and it could be seen that one was a ship of the Indian trade, the other a schooner—a very fast sailer.

The Indiaman was easily recognized from her yellowish sails.

What she should be doing in such a place, was a puzzle to the commander of the frigate; but his suspicions were excited by the fact that she was standing straight toward the port, evidently trying to enter it.

When she was first sighted, she was running to the west, under a press of canvas; but as soon as she saw the frigate coming toward her, she hove to, while the schooner ran down past her, and interposed between her and the man-of-war.

The wind at the time, was fair for a ship going into Brest, and the shore was lined with batteries, that prevented the English from coming inside a line, about two miles from the shore.

Inside the harbor lay several French ships; but, so great was the fear of British prowess in the minds of the Gauls at that time, when the name of Nelson was still remembered, that a force of three frigates had proved amply sufficient to keep in six French frigates, and two ships-of-the-line.

The Bellona was a ship of the same class as the Guerriere and Macedonian; and had with her two consorts, who were out of gunshot and almost out of sight at the time, on the northern board of their station, looking out for ships coming from the northwest, whence the great part of the blockade runners were expected.

The Indiamen usually went far away from Brest, and the appearance of this one showed the British captain that she was probably a prize to a French privateer.

Captain Peters, commander of the Bellona, was a regular, typical British seaman, with square jaw, mutton-chop whiskers, red face, and the voice of a man who is used to shouting orders in the midst of howling gales through a speaking-trumpet.

On the quarter-deck he was unapproachable, but on shore the jolliest of men.

His first lieutenant, Mr. Hawke, was in charge of the ship at the time the two sails were discovered by the lookout, and sent down word to the captain as soon as he had ordered sail made.

Captain Peters came on deck as he felt, from the motion of the frigate, that she was getting out of the vicinity of the coast.

The wind was fresh but by no means heavy, and the Bellona was not a fast ship, close-hauled. The strangers had the weather-gage on her, and it was soon apparent that, if they chose to put to sea again, the Bellona could not catch them.

The captain saw this as soon as the schooner had interposed between him and the Indiaman; but he was one of the kind of men who never give in when they are beaten, till the result is no longer in the smallest doubt.

"We ought to get the ship, at least," he said to Hawke, as he paced the quarter-deck uneasily, casting glances at the chases. "She is a jill sailor, and she seems to be making for the port. I wonder who that schooner is? I never saw a Frenchman with that rig; but no one but

a French privateersman would think of going into Brest in broad daylight."

Mr. Hawke looked at the strangers, and observed, in a thoughtful way:

"I am not so sure of that, captain. The rig is not French, and I don't believe that any French privateersman has the pluck to do what those fellows are doing. To my thinking, that is a Yankee."

"A Yankee!" echoed Peters. "Why, man alive, there isn't a Yankee man-of-war afloat by this time! Don't you know that the Government have sent a squadron to the coast of the United States that will take every ship they have got, in less than two months? Let me see: war was declared last June, and this is October. No, sir; by this time, as I said before, there isn't a Yankee man-of-war afloat on the high seas."

Hawke smiled in an exasperating way he had, for he was a man of much superior social position to his commander at home, and had a way of aggravating him which Peters, who had come up from the forecastle, in the good old days, could not understand, much less resent openly.

The lieutenant answered, in his smooth, sneering tones:

"I am by no means inclined to doubt that, sir; but it is quite possible that, although the regular men-of-war may be all sunk, as you say, there may be a few schooners left, in the shape of privateers, which may be preying on our commerce. That schooner has the look of a privateer."

"Privateer or man-of-war, she has a tremendous amount of impudence, I must say," interrupted Peters in an angry tone, for he thought his first officer was sneering at him, though he could not tell in what the sneer consisted, so smooth were the words and tones of Hawke.

"She don't suppose she is going to pass into Brest without my leave, does she? Get the men to quarters, sir; and as soon as she comes within range give her a shot, and make her show her colors."

The first lieutenant bowed, and the notes of the boatswain's whistle resounded through the ship in a few minutes, calling all hands; while the long roll of the drum showed that the duty on hand was serious.

By the time the men of the Bellona were at their stations, the schooner was within a mile of the frigate, and the captain ordered a gun fired at her, with the aim directed at her mainmast. He did this in true British style, on the principle that any one who tried to enter the port of Brest, when it had been declared in a state of blockade, must be an enemy, and should be sunk first and tried afterward.

The Bellona was a thirty-six, with twelve-pounders for her heaviest guns; but her shot did not touch the schooner, which immediately changed her course and held up to the wind, so as to show her whole side, when the flag of the American republic was thrown out into prominence on the breeze, and the little craft fired a gun in reply, that sent a shot into the frigate with a deep, booming report, that made Hawke exclaim:

"By Jove, Captain Peters, we've caught a Tartar! That was a thirty-two-pounder."

Before the words were finished, the shot struck the ship, and the crashing of timbers below announced that it had gone through the hull of the frigate below, while the shrieks of the men between decks showed that it must have killed and wounded quite a number.

Captain Peters was not so much surprised as aghast at the sudden assumption of an offensive role by an antagonist that he had deemed beneath contempt, before this shot told, too late, that he had, as Hawke expressed it, "caught a Tartar."

Without the slightest hesitation he crowded all sail on his ship and closed in on the schooner, at the risk of being hulled again, in the certainty that, if he could get close enough, he could blow her out of the water.

But the commander of the American had evidently no idea of entering into any such contest. As soon as the frigate shaped her course toward the small vessel to intercept her, the schooner hauled her wind and went off to the offing with the ship after her, in a position in which she could fire at the frigate all the time, giving the latter an opportunity to return the fire, but keeping at the distance that would give the schooner the full advantage of greater weight of metal and greater charge of powder, in her single gun, over anything that the frigate could show against her.

Inside of five minutes Captain Peters saw he could not catch the little schooner, and that he was bound to get the worst of any contest on the conditions as they existed.

To say that he was angry is to put it too mildly. He was furious.

He swore like a trooper or a foremast hand, and was about to go into a fit, when his first lieutenant told him:

"There is a way we can get that fellow, I think, Captain Peters."

"What—what?" spluttered Peters.

Hawke pointed to the Indiaman, which, during the fracas with the schooner, had been

standing to the east, and was now down to leeward of the Bellona on her way to the harbor of Brest.

"That ship is the prize of the schooner, we may be sure, sir; and if we take her back, the schooner will be obliged to come close to us or lose the prize."

Peters caught at the suggestion at once, and the head of the frigate was put to the east after the Indiaman, which was sailing toward the harbor of Brest as hard as she could be driven, with all sail set and a good prospect of getting inside the fire of the batteries within a short time if she were not stopped.

Peters knew that his ship, though not very fast on a wind, having the weather-gage on the Indiaman, which was a very dull sailer, would probably be able to overhaul her within the distance safe to venture. Accordingly he crowded all the canvas he could on his ship; turned her round on her heel, and stood after the India trader, leaving the schooner to take care of herself.

The consequence was that, in half an hour more, he had chased the Indiaman under the guns of the batteries, and was throwing his shot over her, when, to his astonishment, she threw out the *British merchant flag* and with it a signal which he understood to mean:

"Don't fire. We are a cartel."

As soon as this signal had been deciphered, the British captain, thinking that it was only an impudent ruse, redoubled his efforts to run down the Indiaman, and finally succeeded in getting so close to her that he could see the people on her decks, though he had not yet fired at her with serious intent.

Then he discovered that there were about a dozen ladies on deck, and the instincts of the gentleman came in to save them. He commanded the fire to cease, while he kept on his course, in the hope of running down his game, without injuring the women.

But, though he ran his ship so close that a biscuit could have been thrown on board, and actually spoke the Indiaman, so that he might have blown her out of the water; though he could see her captain on deck and recognize him plainly in the dress of the East India Company's service, he could not get her to heave-to, till both ships were within shot of the batteries on shore.

The first intimation he had of this fact was when the shot from the French guns began to fly over the frigate and the Indiaman alike; while, at the same time, the schooner, which had crept up astern again, began to send in her thirty-two-pound shot, with such deadly, though deliberate aim, that Captain Peters saw he should have to get out of his position, or have his ship disabled.

Determined not to give up the Indiaman without a struggle, he tacked his ship so as to take her out of the range of fire from the batteries on shore, but threw out a boat to board the Indiaman, that was evidently totally unarmed.

The batteries from the shore fired away rapidly, but with bad aim, and the frigate escaped with a few twelve-pound shot that did no material damage.

The captain watched his boat; saw it board the Indiaman; which was immediately turned back to the ship; while the troublesome schooner, with her single gun, was silent at last, as if she did not propose to fight any more, with the great disparity of force between her and the frigate.

Twenty minutes later, Captain Peters had summoned the captain of the Indiaman Madras on board, and was demanding of him, in stern tones, his reasons for the course he had taken in not heaving-to when summoned to do so by the frigates.

Captain Cole (for that gentleman was still in command of the Indiaman) told the story of his capture and the generosity with which he had been treated by his captor, and claimed that he had the right, under his powers as a captain in the East India Company's service, to make a cartel of his ship, as he had claimed by signal. He demanded to be allowed to proceed on his voyage, and treat for the ransom of his ship.

Captain Peters listened to the story, and then said plumply that "the cartel was disallowed, and the Indiaman must go on her way to her original port, in charge of the frigate, till she met another, when she would be convoyed into port, and the Yankee should be cheated of his prize."

Captain Cole listened to this, and said in reply that "his honor as an officer was bound up in the matter, and that, rather than do what he was requested by the British captain, he would give up the charge of the ship altogether, and let the frigate take her in, if she could. He could not break his word," he said.

Then Captain Peters waxed wrothy, and began to swear in the good old-fashioned way that British sailors affected in those days, as he said that "by all the gods, he would see that the India Company's captain should do as he was told, and that the Indiaman should not be given up to the Yankees."

He was still talking in this strain, when he was rewinded, in a very disagreeable way, that

there were other persons to be consulted, by the boom of the schooner's long gun and the passage of the shot through the cabin of the Bellona, smashing the sofas and cots on which the gallant captain reposed his manly form in his hours of ease, while the further way of the shot, through the 'tween-decks, ended in knocking one gun out of its carriage, killing or wounding the whole crew of the piece.

The angry captain looked over the rail at the distant form of the schooner, and saw that she was sailing toward him, as if challenging him to closer fight. The bait took.

Hastily telling the captain of the Indiaman to "keep his ship near the frigate, and to wait on events," the captain of the Bellona turned his broadside toward the schooner once more, and found that he was within gunshot; for he could see several shots strike her as he fired his whole broadside.

For the next hour he was engaged, trying to get to close action with the audacious little craft and, before he knew it, the Indiaman was safe again inside the French batteries, when the schooner altered her tactics entirely, and stood out to sea, as if to lead him a chase. Within an another hour, he became convinced that the one gun of the schooner, with her swiftness and power of keeping just at the distance her commander wanted, was going to beat the whole broadside of the frigate, which sounded like pop-guns beside the deep reports of the long thirty-two.

Then, when it was too late, he noticed also, that he had been drawn too far away from his station, and that the schooner would be able from her great superiority of speed to get inside the forts, by making a great curve, in which she would have to sail two miles to the one of the frigate.

And, strange as it seemed to him, it was certain that the Yankee schooner was going into Brest in broad daylight, though the firing of the ship had attracted her two consorts, which were coming up to see what was the matter.

As this conviction dawned on Peters, he saw a chance to retrieve his losses and capture the schooner.

He abandoned the chase as if in despair, and contented himself with taking the inside track, so as to intercept the schooner, if she should try to enter the harbor. But the captain of the privateer immediately followed, and opened his fire on the frigate, so sharply that, in very desperation, the frigate was obliged to turn and defend herself. Ten minutes of this sort of work, and the mainmast of the Bellona, sorely wounded, began to totter. To save it from going overboard, the frigate had to shorten sail, and thus give the schooner the very chance for which her commander had been looking, all day.

That result accomplished, the Saucy Jane sailed past the Bellona, as if the frigate had been standing still, and went into the harbor of Brest before the three British frigates which could not get up in time to prevent her from doing it.

The Saucy Jane and her prize had run the blockade into a French port, in the face of a whole squadron.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE HARBOR.

IN the midst of all the firing of the chase and the excitement of running the blockade into Brest the deck of the schooner had been occupied by the form of a young girl, who had kept her place with a coolness that caused the oldest sailors on board to regard her with a sort of superstitious veneration, finding its expression in low words of admiration.

Kitty Clayborne, with a courage that showed how accustomed she had become to the ordinary perils of a sea-fight, watched the whole progress of the affair, from the time the frigate had first opened fire on the schooner, till that when the big ship, with her mainmast tottering, abandoned the chase in despair and allowed the Saucy Jane to sail into Brest, without a spar out of place, and with her prize intact.

Colonel Maddox, his yellow face set in an expression of unwilling admiration of the schooner's performances, remained on deck by his niece and not once asked her to go below.

In fact, he had forgotten all about her, in the excitement of the chase of the schooner.

At one time the shots of the Bellona had struck the Saucy Jane, raking her, from her starboard bow to her port quarter, and killing two men in the passage; but the colonel never noticed it, and, to Eaton's surprise, the face of Kitty Clayborne never blanched at the sight, though she was by no means without sensibility, as he had found on more than one occasion.

The girl was to him an embodiment of the pluck sometimes found in women, which, as in Jean of Arc, in the Maid of Saragossa, Moll Pitcher, and a few others, makes the owner a marked character in history.

As the frigate gave up the chase, Kitty turned to Eaton to say in a tone that showed she had been suffering no nervous tension:

"I declare, captain, I am beginning to be astonished. I did not feel afraid of the guns of that ship at all. What little pops they sound, beside this old fellow here."

As she patted the breech of the long thirty-

two, with an affection that could not have been exceeded by the sailors that manned it. Old Tom Tucker, who had watched her, all through the battle, out of the corner of his eye, ventured to interpose, with a freedom that came of the way the sailors of privateers were treated, in comparison with those of a man-of-war:

"Ax yer parding, miss; but I reckon as how you must hev come of fightin' stock."

Eaton frowned, and was about to check the officious tongue of the old mariner, when Kitty, who had become quite familiar with many of the older sailors of the schooner, answered:

"You are telling the truth, Tom. My father died on the field of battle, and my mother was the sister of this old soldier here."

And she patted the hand of her uncle, with an affection he deserved from her, whatever the faults of Colonel Maddox in his relations to the rest of the world, especially the poor ryots of India.

Maddox seemed, for the first time, to hear what was going on, and said, in a listless way, as if he was very much dispirited:

"Ay, ay, child. Pluck is all very well; but the time is coming when it will count for nothing against the guns of a little bit of a smack, like this. What pluck was required to take this schooner into port? None. All she had to do was to keep at a distance that enabled her to pick her antagonist to pieces, and never get a scratch herself. I don't see much pluck about that. I wouldn't have let you stay on deck, if there had been any danger, would I, do you think?"

Kitty was angry, and said, in a sharp tone, pointing to the deck of the schooner, near the foremast; where it was all stained with blood:

"Does that look as if there had been *no danger*, uncle? The fact is, you men think, because we women have been kept at home all our lives, with no opportunity to know what a battle is like, we are the cowards you would like to see us."

The colonel looked round at the spot she pointed to, and said indifferently:

"I did not notice it before, my dear. Well, if you like that sort of thing, I must say I don't. Your mother had no love for scenes of blood. I am sorry you are becoming spoiled. Captain Eaton, you have taken your schooner in very handsomely; and now, I suppose, you are willing to treat for our ransom. How much do you expect from the French Government, for bringing in so many women and children, to go to a French prison?"

He spoke very bitterly, and his face was as sour as could be; for the old soldier was deeply mortified and alarmed, at the prospect of being taken into France, as a prisoner.

Eaton smiled as he said:

"I thought I would show you, colonel, that all the forces of Great Britain could not prevent me from taking the Madras into Brest. If I had had a prize crew on her, instead of turning her into a cartel, it would have been all the same. I had made up my mind to take her into Brest, and there she has gone. Cole has not broken his word. If he had, and had gone off with the English frigate, I should have been obliged to sink the frigate and the Indiaman together. You have found out that I can do it, if I want to, at any time, for I am able to keep the schooner out of reach of any frigate that the English Government has on this station, and I can hit any one of them while they cannot hit me. It is not a question of courage, as you say; but one of getting what one wants. War is a game in which everything is fair."

The colonel made no reply. He was too angry to speak in any but an angry way, and realized that he had a great deal of property on board the schooner, which depended on the generosity of his captor, as to whether it would be entirely confiscated or not.

Eaton saw his evident sullenness, and said to him, with a gesture of invitation:

"Colonel Maddox, if you will step this way, I should like a word with you."

The colonel stiffly followed his captor to the side of the quarter-deck, just as the schooner ran inside the two moles that form the entrance to most French harbors.

The Madras had gone in long before, and the forts at the entrance were still crowded with soldiers, who cheered the schooner as she passed in, happy to see that she had beaten their hereditary foes.

The colonel was embarrassed at the summons of Eaton, but he was too proud to show it. He drew himself up like a post, and said:

"Well, sir, what is it?"

Eaton smiled good-temperedly, as he replied:

"Don't you think, colonel, that you have been treated with courtesy on this vessel?"

The question took the old soldier aback, for he could not but admit the implication.

"Yes, sir," he replied, stiffly. "I have never denied it."

"Then why," asked the young man, in the same tone, "do you still cherish malice at the fortune of war? You are not now a combatant, and your property is not liable to confiscation, as I have told you before. I do not intend to claim any rights over anything you have. Why not give me the courtesy I have always showed

you, and allow we have beaten your people fairly? Your present attitude is not only unwarranted, but it is also in bad taste in a prisoner. Your niece is a guest on board this schooner, and has been treated in the same way as yourself. Have you any complaint to make about your treatment?"

The yellow on the old Anglo-Indian's face had become a deep orange, as he answered:

"No, sir, I have already told you I have nothing to complain of, except being carried into France. You might at least have taken us into your own port, and not exposed us to the insults and jeers of a French mob, which is sure to triumph over us, inasmuch as we are at war with France, and have been so for twelve years past. Do you intend to give us up for safe-keeping to the French authorities here? I suppose you must or you would not have come in here."

Eaton shook his head.

"I have no such intentions, sir, I assure you."

"But if the Frenchmen get wind of the fact that we are English, and that I have any property on board the schooner, they will be sure to claim it. They took prisoners all the Englishmen and their families, traveling in France, not many years ago, at the outbreak of the war. It is impossible that you can protect us."

Eaton compressed his lips as he answered:

"I have always managed to protect my prizes against open war, and I think you underrate the honor of the French people. I will answer for it, no person on board this schooner will be disturbed by the French officers."

This proved to be the case. When the schooner finally came to an anchor in the basin of the outer harbor, and the custom-house officers came on board, the examination was only a formal one, and the Frenchmen were a polite as could be, while they expressed themselves as being delighted with the beating the Yankees had given to the "Sacr-e r-r-obsifs" as they called the English frigates, outside the harbor.

The colonel was so far mollified, he began to think that the bitterness of death was past, and that he might be induced to be happy in captivity, when he saw Captain Cole, who had entered the harbor ahead of the Saucy Jane, coming to the schooner in his boat, with the evident intention of speaking the commander of that little craft.

The Madras lay alongside the schooner, and the contrast in size was so great that the Frenchmen in the harbor came to stare at the two vessels, and wonder how the schooner had managed to take the ship. It was well known that a fleet of Indiamen had on one occasion, beaten off a squadron of French men-of-war; while the size of the schooner, and the fact that she carried only one gun, was another cause of the wonder they freely expressed.

Some of them called out to the Yankee sailors on the Saucy Jane to make inquiries on the subject; but got so little satisfaction from the honest "Cape-Codders," who did not understand them, that they finally settled down to the idea that the English and Yankees were one as bad as the other, the reason being that neither party understood French and therefore must be barbarians.

The captain of the schooner went on shore to see the authorities on the subject of selling his prize, and met Cole as he was coming on board. The worthy captain of the Indiaman expressed his desire to pay a ransom that might not be repudiated at home; and Eaton, being equally anxious to have the business settled, it was arranged that the sale should take place in open market, the next day, and that the terms should be cash or good bills on London.

The end of the matter was that, in three days from the time Eaton entered the harbor of Brest, the Indiaman sailed freely as a cartel, to the care of the English blockaders outside, and the Saucy Jane, with three hundred thousand dollars on board in hard cash, was lying at the mouth of the harbor, waiting for the wind to become favorable to her, in her effort to get away.

The hardest part of the venture of Eaton was yet to come. The Madras had paid her ransom, and they saw her, from the harbor, spoken by the British ships, as soon as she left the shelter of the batteries.

It was therefore certain that the British outside world do their best to take back the money they knew to be on the schooner. Such hauls were not common at that period of the war. The fortunes of the contest had inclined so decidedly to the English side, that it was impossible to find a French ship with any valuable lading that would venture out of the shelter of the shore, except the smugglers, which were mostly managed by English sailors.

Colonel Maddox, with an inconsistency, he did not attempt to excuse, when he was offered his choice to go on the released Madras or stay on the schooner, declined to go on the Indiaman, and gave as his reason that he had no faith in her ever getting to England after what had happened. He preferred to go on the schooner, he said, because he was certain that she must be captured as she left the port, and he had rather go to his native land on a frigate, than on a ship that had not a gun on board her, if a French lugger should come creeping

The Three Frigates.

out of some bay after her, as she was going up the channel.

Therefore, when the night came, on which the Saucy Jane was to make her attempt to leave Brest, in the face of the English ships that were watching for her, the colonel and his niece were on board, and the old soldier said to his niece, as they were in the cabin, together:

"You are wondering how it is I stay here, when we might both be on our way to England. Isn't that true, Kitty?"

For some reason or other, Kitty Clayborne colored violently. She had been sitting in the cabin for a long time, as if buried in thought, and the colonel's words caused her to start.

Hastily she said:

"I don't know why I should wonder, sir. It is very much pleasanter on board the schooner, than on the Madras."

The colonel, absorbed in his own thoughts, did not notice his niece's confusion, but went on, in the same way, at cross-purposes with Kitty: "Yes, I should not be surprised if you did; but, if you knew all, you would not wonder."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Kitty, innocently.

Maddox drew closer to her to whisper:

"Not a word, on your life, but, if the frigates chase us to-night, we're sure to be taken."

Kitty shuddered slightly.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this."

Here his voice sunk to a whisper.

"I have a scheme to make the ships take her, as soon as we are outside the harbor."

"But how, how?" asked the girl, in the same tone, her eyes opening wide as she listened.

Maddox gave her a mysterious wink, and whispered back:

"You ask too many questions. I have a plan. You will see, when it is too late to tell who laid it."

They were sitting in the cabin of the schooner, at the time.

Eaton had given the colonel, at the time the Indiaman left the harbor, several hints that his company might prove inconvenient in the future, and that he had better take passage in the Madras to England inasmuch as the schooner would not be able to land him anywhere but in territory hostile to England, and it was not fair to expose a young lady like Kitty Clayborne to the risks of warfare, when no necessity

The colonel had been impervious to hints, and for some reason, the young privateersman had not told him, in plain terms, that he could not sail in the schooner.

As Maddox uttered his last words to Kitty, about his mysterious plan, the dusk was gathering in, and the wind, which had been blowing from the southwest for some days, with a good deal of fog and rain, had changed to the east, and came dry and cold, over the hills of Normandy.

Maddox knew enough of the sea to know, or at least suspect, that the departure of the schooner would be set for that night, in all probability, and that the ships outside would be driven out to sea by the change of wind, all of them circumstances in favor of the Saucy Jane.

That he was right, was proved by the entrance of Eaton from the deck, where he had been talking with the French pilot, with the announcement:

"Colonel Maddox, I am sorry to tell you that your last chance to get to England is gone. I have waited for a long time, but there is no waiting any more. The schooner leaves the harbor to-night."

The veteran's face wore a strange smile, as he said:

"My dear captain, I have changed my mind. I have a sincere desire to see New York, now that your people are at war with us, and find out, for myself, if you are a good specimen of the Yankee. I will share the fortunes of the Saucy Jane."

CHAPTER XVII.

RUNNING OUT.

THE young privateersman looked at his guest (or prisoner), with a certain grave scrutiny, under which, somehow or other, the eyes of Maddox sunk, as Eaton answered:

"If you are sincere in the wish, sir, it shall be executed in short order. But you must remember your niece will be exposed to a great deal of danger to-night; and it will be much better for you to go ashore, in the character of paroled prisoners, who have to wait for the first cartel sent to England with exchanges."

Maddox looked at the deck, as he said, slowly:

"Of course if you are not willing to have us on the schooner, and have resolved to turn us out into an enemy's country, to be robbed, you can do so."

Eaton flushed slightly, as he replied:

"My dear sir, you are putting it in a very strange light. I have said nothing of the sort. On the contrary, it is because I am too anxious to have you on board, though I know it is against my interests, that I feel bound to give

you every chance to get out of the danger we are sure to encounter to-night."

Kitty looked up at him.

"What kind of danger?" she asked.

"The danger of being sunk, Miss Clayborne. It is, of course, known on the frigates, that we have a great deal of treasure on board, and the English captains are sure to be very eager to capture us, for the prize-money. Our only chance to get out at all, is to go now, while this wind keeps the frigates off the land, and even then it could not be done in daylight."

"Then are you going out to-night?" asked the girl, with eyes all aglow with the excitement. "Won't that be fun? Oh, we shall get through, we shall get through! I know it, I know it! This schooner can go anywhere, and do anything in the world!"

Eaton could not help a smile of pleasure at the sight of the face of the girl, lit up as it was with enthusiasm. Then, some other feeling came over him, and he sighed heavily as he said:

"Don't be too sure yet. We may run into the very midst of them. It all depends on whether they take their boats in. If they don't, we have a good chance; but if they do, we may have a great deal of fighting to beat them off."

Kitty waved her hand in a triumphant way as she retorted:

"I don't care who comes after us, or how many there are; we shall beat them. I'm sure of it, and I never feel that way, that I am not right. When are you going out?"

"At the turn of the tide," said Eaton.

Had he been watching the colonel's face, he would have noticed a look of triumphant cunning there; but the tones of the veteran were indifferent as he asked:

"When does the tide turn?"

"At ten o'clock. The moon sets, too; so we shall have a good chance to steal out unseen, if the lights are put out, and we keep perfectly still, when we get near the boats."

Colonel Maddox said nothing more, but Kitty asked, in the same way as before:

"And what are the boats likely to do with us?"

"They are certain, if the crews see us, to make a dash, if they are near enough. Then it will be a question of whether they can close with the schooner, so as to get aboard her, before she can run out to sea, or whether we shall sink enough of them to enable us to scrape clear. If we can get out, I am not afraid of anything; but it will be ticklish work to scrape past those boats, if they catch sight of us before we are safe at sea."

"Suppose," asked the colonel lazily, "that as we go out of the harbor, we come across the whole fleet of them, stretched across the mouth, what what would you do then?"

"We are not likely to find them there. The guards at the two forts will keep them clear. They will not venture in as close as that. It is more likely they will be waiting, in a semi-circle, to intercept us, about a half-mile from the shore. The darkness of the night will be our salvation, if anything is."

The colonel said nothing more, except:

"Well, if you are not going till ten, I will take a stroll on the quay for a little while. I have found a fellow-countryman. He is a great scamp, of course, or he would not be here. To tell the truth, he is a blockade-runner, and has made more money in the business than any other man I know. I promised to say good-bye to him when I went."

Eaton hesitated.

"I don't think it would be safe to let any one but ourselves know when we are going, colonel."

"Oh, bless your soul, I don't mean to tell him we are to run the blockade at ten o'clock," said the colonel hastily, turning red again. "I shall only say we are going in a few days, I don't know when, and that I have come to bid him good-bye."

Eaton looked at him in the same searching way as before, as he replied, with some emphasis.

"Colonel Maddox, I hope you would not try to give away any information of the movements of the schooner, after the way in which you have been treated. You are free to go where you will, sir; but I warn you that, if you do not act on the honor of a gentleman, our relations will be materially changed."

Maddox colored still deeper as he said in a low voice:

"The insinuation is one that I repudiate, and I think it is not a fair one to make against a prisoner. You will live to be sorry that you said that, sir."

"I hope so," was Eaton's grave reply, as Maddox left the cabin. Then he said to Kitty Clayborne:

"And you, Miss Clayborne, are you not afraid to trust yourself with us Yankees, in what I know must be a hazardous venture?"

Kitty shook her head as she replied with rising color:

"As long as you are in command, I have no fears. I have seen you in danger too often, not to know that all a man can do, will be done for my safety. Captain Eaton, I think, if I were one of your nation, I should be afraid to stay in the same vessel with you; but as it is, I am

saved from the danger by the fact that our countries are at war."

Without thinking what he said, and puzzled at her tone and words, the young privateersman asked curiously:

"Danger? What danger do you mean?"

Kitty smiled as she replied:

"Well, you are a very fascinating man, and it might be dangerous, as I have a heart. But, of course, yours is given to some Yankee lady; so I shall have to take care of my own, by remembering that you are my natural enemy."

Eaton listened to her in silence, and his face was very pale, as he answered in a low voice:

"My dear young lady, you have said something that compels me to speak out. I do not wish to sail under false colors. I am married."

It was Kitty Clayborne's turn to grow pale now, as she listened; for she had grown to regard the young and handsome privateersman in a way she had never done with any other man in her short life. She said nothing, and Eaton, without another word went on deck to look after the safety of his schooner, while the poor English girl was left alone in the cabin.

For a few minutes she sat there in a sort of stupor, with her eyes on the deck, her heart feeling as it had never felt before.

"I AM MARRIED."

She repeated the words to herself in a vague, meaningless way, as if she did not understand them, and then fell into a fit of musing that lasted her till she heard the step of her uncle coming back, and realized that it was getting late.

Some feeling induced Kitty to avoid her uncle's eye as he came down the steps of the companionway; but the veteran was absorbed too much in his own thoughts to notice anything in his niece, out of the common. He glanced round the cabin, and as soon as he saw her he whispered:

"Two hours more, Kitty, and we shall be free."

Then as if he feared he had said too much, he dived into his state-room, and was seen no more.

Something in his words disquieted Kitty, after the suspicious way in which he had behaved during the evening, and it set her to thinking.

She went on deck to get the air and found the whole of the harbor of Brest covered with a sort of thin haze, such as often comes up in warm weather. The stars were shining through the haze as if the sky were clear above, while the fog hung over the water.

The wind, which had been strong when it first started from the east, had lulled to a mere breeze which hardly ruffled the water, and the moon was sinking in the west, giving promise of a very dark night, as soon as she had taken her final departure.

Across the harbor, with a ghost-like effect, every now and then glided a French lugger, her red sails looking as if they were on fire, in the rays of the sinking moon.

They were only fishing-boats, which the frigates allowed to pass without hindrance, unless suspected of being smugglers in disguise.

There were no rowing boats to be seen, and the harbor was very quiet, compared to the bustle of the day.

The Saucy Jane lay in the inner basin, and her sails had been loosened and lay on the booms ready to hoist. Her men seemed to be all below, for the only person on deck was the old French pilot who was smoking his pipe by the mainmast, and occasionally going to the side to look over at the tide, still coming in from the sea.

Kitty instinctively looked around for Eaton, but that gentleman was not visible, and she had the more opportunity to gaze about her and take in the land and sea-scape.

She was rather surprised at the silence on the schooner; but turned her eyes to the town, behind the vessel and harbor, in the hope of finding some object of interest to occupy her, while she staid on deck. The lights of the houses were gleaming, as the inhabitants prepared for bed; for it was about nine o'clock, and the Normandy and Brittany people are early sleepers. The clocks of the town sent out their warning of the hour, just as she came on deck; and the harbor fell into a more profound silence than before.

Kitty Clayborne looked round, in a mood that made her observe everything more closely than usual. She wanted to distract her thoughts; to stop the strange, gnawing pain that she felt at her heart. She threw herself into the scene around her, with a resolution to find something to amuse her; so took an inventory of all she saw, trying to make out a story of some kind about it.

As she was weaving these fancies, her attention was attracted by one of the lights in the town, which had a strange appearance. It flashed every now and then, with a radiance that lasted for less than a second, and recurred at intervals; till the girl saw that these intervals were set in a kind of rhythm, and followed by periods of equal darkness.

She might never have noticed it had she not been watching for something to distract her

attention, and the flash of the light happened to come into her eyes.

The fact that it flickered and then reappeared, made her notice it first; and she presently became so much interested in the sight that she watched it attentively for near half an hour; till the step of the captain of the schooner on the deck, coming from the forecastle, told her that she was not to be alone much longer.

Kitty Clayborne, after the words that had passed between them in the cabin, felt considerable embarrassment in meeting the young privateer; but Eaton took away the feeling by saying, pleasantly:

"Glad to see you on deck, Miss Clayborne. You are going to have plenty of excitement to-night. What do you think of the prospect?"

Kitty was watching the light as he spoke, and she answered:

"It's a very strange thing, Captain Eaton; but do you sailors ever signal to each other with lights?"

"Certainly. Have you seen anything that looks like a signal?"

His voice was rather anxious as he asked the question, for the men knew that he was going out on a desperate errand, and that, if his design were known, the difficulty and danger of the expedition would be doubled.

Kitty pointed to the light she had been watching for so long, and asked:

"What does it mean when a light is flashed for ever so long, and then put out for a full minute? It looks just as if some one were talking to some one else."

Eaton came to her side and asked her to point out the particular light she meant. He was saved the necessity of any questioning by the sudden extinguishing of the light, and its as sudden reappearance in the same style as before for a period of about five minutes. He watched it, as Kitty had done, and then went to the pilot, and conversed with him in French for several minutes. When he came back to Kitty he seemed to be very grave and anxious, for he said to her:

"Miss Clayborne, your seeing that light may be a very lucky thing for the safety of the schooner. It is a signal, as you thought; and the only trouble about it is, that it shows some one else is going out, besides the schooner."

"Why, who made it?" asked Kitty.

"It is a smuggler's signal. It seems that there are two firms of smugglers in this town, who are composed of English and French people. Their business is against the laws of both England and France; but there is so much money in it, that they are protected by men high in authority at the emperor's court; and the English frigates outside, though they are supposed to be here for the purpose of stopping just such things, are said, by the pilot, to be interested, as far as their captains are concerned, in the smugglers' profits. The signal is to them, the pilot says; and they are to move out to a place that they have already agreed on with the agents of this firm, in the hope that the smuggler, whoever she may be, may get time to slip out of the harbor without giving the frigates a chance to catch her."

"Then why should we not go in the same way as the smuggler goes?" asked Kittie instantly.

"That is what is my intention, if the signal is a genuine one; but I have my doubts on that," replied Eaton gravely.

Kitty started as she said:

"What makes you say that, sir? Has anything happened to make you think any one is going to betray you?"

Eaton hesitated for a little, and at last said:

"I don't know that I ought to say all I think, especially to you, who are on the opposite side of this contest—"

"Oh, no—" exclaimed Kitty impulsively. Then she stopped suddenly, and added in a lower tone:

"That is—I—I don't think I am such a savage as to hate all men, because they come from the other side of the sea."

She was very glad that it was too dark to see faces; for she felt that her own was burning.

Eaton said nothing for a minute or two; during which he was watching the light in the house on shore, with its regular appearances and disappearances, till at last he broke out:

"I must say it, Miss Clayborne. All our lives may depend on it. Have you no suspicion of your uncle?"

Kitty started violently as she stammered:

"Oh, please don't ask me, sir—I—I—I could not tell you—but—but—"

Her silence and confusion told the story, and Eaton saw that his suspicions were verified.

He came to her softly, and said, in his low tones, that she had learned, to her sorrow, she could not resist:

"Kitty Clayborne, your uncle shall never be harmed, as long as you are his niece; but it is necessary for the safety of all on board that I should know what he has told you. If you do not say it at once, I shall be obliged, in justice to him, and to all on board, to put him in irons as a prisoner who has broken his parole. Tell me all, and I promise you he shall not be harmed; but I must know."

"But I—I—I don't know anything, indeed,"

protested Kitty; "except that he said we should be free to-night. That is all, and I don't know if he meant that."

Eaton questioned her closely, but could get no more out of her; partly because she would not betray her uncle; but still more, because she did not have any idea of what kind of treachery the old man was hatching.

At last Eaton saw that the light-signal in the house on shore had gone out, and at the same time the church-clocks all struck ten.

The sound of the deep-toned bells in the different towers startled the watchers on the schooner, and reminded them that the time to port had come. The old pilot took his clay pipe out of his mouth, and said to Eaton:

"Allons, monsieur le capitaine, si vous roulez appeler tous les matelots, nous partirons." [Come, Cap, if you'll call all hands, we'll sail.]

Eaton hesitated a moment, and held a short conversation with the pilot, after which he said to Kitty:

"Go down-stairs, child. The danger to-night will be one in which you cannot share. The contest will not be with guns, but at close quarters, and it is no sight for a lady to see."

"For all that," the girl replied resolutely, "I am going to stay on deck. I will show you, if I am only a girl, I can do as well as any man you ever saw who was no stronger than I."

Eaton looked at her for a minute, as if there was something in her young enthusiasm that touched him in a manner he could not explain, and answered slowly:

"Very well; if you will, you will. But if harm comes of this night's work, remember I told you not to stay on deck."

Then he turned to the fore-hatchway, and called down, in a guarded way, that showed he knew he was expected:

"Folger, call all hands. The time has come."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

THE night was darker than ever when the men of the Saucy Jane came stealing up on deck, in a way that showed they had been waiting for the signal. They were fully dressed, and had arms on, as Kitty could see when they came near her.

Every man had a pair of pistols in his belt, and they wore cutlasses besides.

They came on deck with a noiseless celerity that told the story of the past success of the privateer. There was no hurry and no talking. The men knew what they were wanted for, and had been down in the forecastle waiting for the order ever since the sun had set, in the expectation of deceiving the Frenchmen themselves, not letting any one know the schooner was going to sea that night.

As they came on deck they went to quarters without orders, as if the whole thing had been arranged beforehand.

The crew of the long gun took their places around it; and Kitty, who was near it, heard the order in a low tone:

"Bring canister. No round shot to-night."

Then the sails of the schooner were hoisted, and the little vessel ran out of the harbor before a light breeze that gave no great velocity to her; while every now and then the canvas flapped as the wind filled it, and the noise of rattling blocks disturbed the stillness. As the schooner stretched out of the inner harbor, the wind grew stronger and stronger, till by the time she had got to the entrance between the two forts the sails were fairly "asleep."

As she neared these forts, Kitty Clayborne, who had staid on deck, according to her promise, saw that the fog, which had been light in the harbor, was thickening fast. The stars were bright overhead, but the water was almost invisible beneath them.

Kitty realized that it would be very easy for the boats of the British ship to steal up in the darkness and be alongside before any sign of their presence was appreciated on board the schooner.

That the skipper of the Saucy Jane was equally aware of this fact became evident when the harbor mouth was reached.

The captain came to the bows of the schooner and conned his vessel very carefully as she cleared the entrance.

The only sounds audible on the Saucy Jane were the low orders:

"Port," "Steady," "Starboard," "Luff a little," "Steady."

The water rippled before the stem of the schooner with a musical gurgle that showed how she was slipping through it, and the girl on her quarter-deck was impressed with the strange charm of a life on the ocean as she never had been before.

The men were perfectly silent, and every now and then the stillness became so profound that the sailors could hear the distant rattle of the blocks on the ships outside the harbor, showing that the frigates had closed in on purpose to catch the schooner.

The fog hid them from sight; but they were so near, at one time, that every one on board held his breath in the expectation that the next moment might disclose the outlines of a frigate looming up in the mist.

At last, the sound which Kitty had been listening for became audible.

It was the dash of oars.

The girl heard it first, and glided forward to the place where Eaton was standing by the knight-heads. She had been at the taffrail of the Saucy Jane when she heard it, and it came from astern.

Eaton started when he felt her touch on his arm. As soon as she had given her news, he hurried to the stern, and after a short pause of listening, he pronounced it to be "more than one boat in pursuit of the schooner, guided by the noise of her blocks as she yawned to and fro."

He stood by the helmsman after that, and sailed the schooner with great care, so as to make the least noise.

The dip of oars died away in the darkness, and the men of the privateer were just beginning to breathe more freely, when they heard, ahead of the schooner, the well known rattle of blocks, and the next moment the spars of a frigate showed over the fog, not three cable-lengths away from them.

The schooner sailed along toward this startling apparition in the same silence that had marked her whole progress. The spars of the ship-of-war were visible above the fog; but her hull was still buried in the mists that hung over the water.

From the angle at which the masts lay it was seen that the schooner had come on the frigate astern, and that she was in a position where it was possible she might remain unseen. The lookouts of a ship are generally ahead, and the eyes of her watchers are rarely turned astern. If the schooner kept on the course she was sailing when the ship loomed up first above the fog, it was quite possible she might yet scrape past if the attention of the frigate's men were not drawn to her.

The ship had her maintopsail to the mast, and it was therefore certain she could not get her guns to bear without some preliminary movements that would occupy time.

With this fact in view, the commander of the Saucy Jane kept on his course, toward the stern of the frigate; and crossed her wake, at less than two cables away. The schooner made no noise in her passage, and the men were again beginning to think that the danger was over; for the spars of the ship were already fading into the fog, when a bright flare illuminated the mist, and at the same minute a voice shouted in stentorian tones:

"Frigate ahoy!!! Yankees! Yankees!!!"

The sound came from the cabin windows of the schooner, and the next minute Kitty heard the shouts of men, roaring out orders and counter orders, while the shuffle of feet on the decks and the creaking of blocks, showed that the lookouts of the frigate had seen the privateer at last.

Eaton remained as cool as ever; but his voice had a stern ring, as he said to Folger:

"Mr. Folger, go down into the cabin, and put the passenger in irons at once. Mr. Hackett, hands by the sheets, to let go and haul. We shall be out of any aim they can take, in less than five minutes. Boys, keep a sharp lookout for the boats. Let them have it, as soon as you see the flash of an oar."

Then the schooner held on her course in the fog, and Kitty, in terror for her uncle, whose treachery had caused all the trouble, ran down to the cabin, and found Folger, with pistol pointed at her uncle, saying sternly:

"Put down yer hands, ole man. 'Tain't no use, and ye mou't as well know it fust as last. If ye're very anxious to go to kingdom-come we're jest the boys kin accommodate ye. I'd ruther do't than not, 'cause they say ye've got a lot of dollars aboard, and the men would jest admire to have the handlin' of them. Give in quietly, or it will be the wuss for ye."

As he spoke, the boom of a gun woke the echoes in the fog, and the old colonel cried out angrily:

"All right. You can iron me, if you please; but I tell you it will be a dear iron for you, when you are caught. Do you hear that gun, sir? That came from one of his majesty's ships, and it was close aboard you too."

Folger laughed as he retorted:

"Oh, yes, I heard it, and I heard suthin' else too. It didn't hit nothen aboard this schooner, and it ain't likely to. If your darned Johnny Bull can't shoot straight in the day, they ain't likely to make any better practice in the dark."

As he said these words, he snapped the irons over the wrists of the mortified old soldier, and Kitty ran up on deck again, to intercede for her relative, with Eaton; when she was surprised to find that the stern windows of the schooner seemed to be all lighted up with something that made her a conspicuous object on the water, in spite of the fog; while the sound of oars could be heard on every side, and the hoarse shouts of officers in boats, calling to their men to "pull harder, for the Yankees were almost at their mercy."

She lost her presence of mind, for the first time since she had been at sea, and forgot to speak to Eaton, who was standing at the binnacle of the schooner, peering through the fog,

and not saying a word, as the *Saucy Jane* ran on.

The sailors were at their posts, calm and resolute, but Kitty began to realize that a fight at long range and one at close quarters were two very different things.

There was a strange look on the faces of the men that showed her they felt more anxious than she had ever seen them before. The shouts of the sailors in the boats, and the peculiar savage effect of their voices, showing that they were all furious and excited, scared the girl for the first time.

What the reason of her terror was she could not have said; but she shrank back from the stern, where she had been accustomed to sit and look on at everything that passed, and took her post by the mainmast, where she felt a kind of shelter from observation.

It was here she was standing as the boats of the men-of-war suddenly made their appearance in the fog, like ghosts, and came dashing up after the schooner in the glare of the burning port-fires. She could see the faces of men in the foremost boat as they sat in the stern-sheets, with muskets between their knees, and noticed that they were dressed like soldiers. She thought they must be marines; but before she could settle it to her own satisfaction, she heard a voice in the foremost boat roar:

"There she is! Give it to the Yankee scoundrels, boys! Marines, fire by file! Pick off any one you can see!"

Then came a sputtering row of flashes in the fog, and Kitty heard, for the first time in her life, the whistle of bullets close to her head. The sound had a strange effect on her, for it made her realize, as no canon-balls had ever done, that the men who fired the shots meant to hit her, if they could.

The great distance at which she had seen cannon fired hitherto, had given her a sort of contempt for their powers of destruction, as far as she was concerned herself, though she knew that a single shot would sink the schooner, if it hit in the right place.

But Kitty, who in these matters was very like a reckless, high-spirited boy, more than a girl, had imbibed a superstition that she could never be hit by a cannon-ball, because she never had been.

The sound of the bullets striking the mast beside her, told her for the first time that she was standing in a very dangerous place, and, with an instinct that would have done credit to an old backwoodsman, the girl slipped round the mast and took to cover with a facility that surprised herself.

Then she heard, as in a dream, the sounds of a ferocious fight going on all round her; saw the schooner surrounded by boats coming closer every moment, with savage men in them, who swore frightfully as they pulled; while the men of the schooner swore back at them, and fired at the boats in a way that fairly froze her blood, from the ferocity of both parties.

There was no mistake about it. Both were in earnest, and the fate of the beaten party bid fair, even to Kitty, who had never seen a board party in her life, to be frightful.

In the midst of all the turmoil her eyes sought the face of Eaton, and she saw he had forgotten all about her in the excitement of the battle.

He was standing on the taffrail of the schooner, directing the fire with a coolness that astonished her. He seemed not to be at all excited, but gave his orders with perfect calmness.

All at once came a cry from the boats alongside, that told her one of them had tried to hook on, and had succeeded in grappling.

Then Eaton, for the first time in the battle, seemed to be angry; for he shouted out, in tones distinctly audible over the noise of the firing and confusion:

"Drive the cursed Englishmen overboard! Don't let a man escape!"

Then came a rush of men to the side of the deck, where the enemy had succeeded in catching hold. The rush frightened Kitty more than any thing else in the whole fight; for the men swore horribly as they went, and the sounds of blows and curses were fairly sickening, as the sailors of the schooner drove back the man-of-war's-men.

It was a fierce struggle, for the time it lasted; and the girl, with a fascination that she could not explain to herself, though she was too frightened to do more than turn her head, yet had a full view of the whole combat.

She saw that the English had secured a hold on the side of the schooner, just abaft the fore-chain-plates. They had hooked on, and were clambering on board, as the Americans met them; and the blows of cutlasses and thrusts of boarding-pikes came thick and fast on both sides.

Kitty saw that the Americans were getting the best of it, on account of being above their adversaries, and that the English were dropping off into the sea, when she heard the yells of the men in another boat, close astern; and in another moment the Americans were attacked on the second side of the schooner.

What followed, Kitty never knew clearly; but she remembered afterward that she saw Eaton dash forward to the place where the boat

was trying to hook on to the taffrail of the *Saucy Jane*.

Then she saw him toss something into the boat, and the next minute came a bright flash, in the midst of the oarsmen, and a terrible explosion.

The men in the English boat seemed to her to be thrown right and left by this flash, and dropped off the stern in confusion, as Eaton called out in his clear tones:

"Give them the grenades, boys! It does the business, every time!"

Then came another and another flash in the fog, as the men of the privateer began to throw hand-grenades into the nearest boats, till a fresh blast of wind struck the schooner, as she opened the cape that had hitherto sheltered her from the influence of the east wind, and careened over to its influence, beginning to leave the boats behind her.

As soon as this had happened, Eaton jumped on the rail of the schooner and cried out:

"Now, boys, give it to them with the long gun."

The schooner was at that moment in a line with the foremost and rearmost boat of those that had chased her so closely, and the order was obeyed.

The long gun boomed, and Kitty shuddered to see the destruction it wrought. Loaded with grape-shot, the charge had room to spread and scatter among the sailors of the boats, crowded into the wake of the *Saucy Jane*. In a moment the foremost was blown to pieces, and disappeared in the water. The fog lifted as the vessel got out of the shelter of the land; two boats were sunk, and the rest gave up the pursuit of the schooner, which went out to sea in triumph.

CHAPTER XIX.

A N O B S T I N A T E M A N.

THE *Saucy Jane* had run to sea in spite of the frigates on blockade, outside Brest, and was careering to the east wind, which blew strong and cool, now they were fairly at sea.

The outermost frigate spread her sails to pursue; but no one on board the privateer had any fears of her, on account of the known swiftness of the *Saucy Jane*.

She took the wind on her port side, a little abaft the beam, and crowded every stitch of canvas to its influence, going at least ten knots an hour to the seven of the frigate, though the latter vessel was by no means a dullard for a British craft.

Kitty Clayborne remained on deck, as long as there was any danger of the capture of the schooner.

When the sails of the English ship nearest to them had sunk into the night, the schooner altered her course to the west, into the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, and Eaton said to Kitty, speaking for the first time since the battle had opened:

"Miss Clayborne, if you will step down into the cabin, I should like to see you a moment."

Kitty, trembling, she knew not why, yet followed the privateersman to the cabin of the little craft, where he sat down and called out to Folger:

"Mr. Folger, a moment, if you please."

Folger, who had evidently been in waiting for the summons, came in, and the captain proceeded:

"Mr. Folger, where is the prisoner?"

Folger pointed to the state-room usually occupied by the colonel.

"In there, Cap. He were mighty cantankerous, and we had to iron him. He seems to take it to heart bad."

"Go and give him my compliments," said the American captain, "and tell him that we are safe at sea, and that his captivity is over. Be sure not to give him any insults, and ask him to step into the main cabin, to see me."

Folger touched his cap in sailor-fashion, and did as he was bid. A few minutes later, Colonel Maddox, looking as if he had suffered severely from mortification and disappointment, came into the cabin and burst out to Eaton:

"Yes, sir, I know what you are going to say; and I don't care what it is. I never gave my parole not to escape, and I am not going to do it now. I had a perfect right to signal to the frigates of my own government, and I shall exercise it, whenever I please. I defy you and your Yankee gang to try me for any offense against the laws of war. You may murder me, if you please; but you shall take the responsibility of the murder."

Kitty had turned as pale as death, and was looking on with a scared expression, in her innocence expecting that her uncle was going to be shot at once.

To her surprise, Eaton waited till the fiery old man had spoken his mind, and then replied calmly.

"I have not accused you of any violation of the laws of war, as yet, colonel. The offense you have committed against me, is one of a very different nature, and I have called this lady here, to witness that I do not treat you with the harshness that you must own, many other men would show you, under the circumstances."

This exordium seemed to affect the old soldier more than a tone of severity would have done; for he asked sullenly:

"What do you mean, sir? I don't understand you."

"You will, in a moment, colonel. First, let me ask you, in the presence of Mr. Folger here, and your niece, whether you have been treated by me with harshness, hitherto?"

With an expression that showed the admission was wrung out of his sense of justice, at great cost to his pride, Maddox said:

"No, sir, I have told you that already."

"You have seen me, in the presence of your niece, at all times; and I wish to ask you further, whether you have any cause to complain of the respect I have accorded to her, as a lady?" pursued Eaton.

Again the admission was wrung from the colonel that no disrespect had been shown to his niece.

"Then why, sir, may I ask you, did you light a port-fire to guide the boats of the British ships to our capture?" asked Eaton, in the same passionless way.

The colonel made no direct reply to this, for a moment, and Eaton continued:

"I gave you the choice of going to England in the cartel, and you refused the offer. You stated that you were anxious to see New York, even in the character of a prisoner, and I gratified the whim, as I thought it, on your part, at considerable inconvenience to myself. My reward for this is that you have drawn my schooner into a fight, in which I have lost twelve men, killed and wounded; and you have exposed you niece to the sight of a boarding scene, which has terrified her beyond measure. Now, sir, I ask you, do you think you have acted the part of an honorable enemy or not?"

The colonel looked as if he would rather that the question had been put to him in any other form. He scowled at the privateersman, and growled:

"The question is an impertinence, and you know it, sir. I am the guardian of my own honor, and if you ask that on shore, I shall see that you are accommodated."

Eaton's face grew dark as he listened to the reply, and he retorted:

"Very well, sir, so be it. You may find reason to wish you had not defied me to a personal combat. For the future I require of you your parole of honor, not to attempt escape, directly or indirectly, or I shall be compelled to put you in irons for the rest of the voyage."

Maddox heard him, with all the bitterness of a disappointed man, as he snarled:

"Iron away, as fast as you like. I will not give my parole not to escape, and I shall take every opportunity I find to do it."

Eaton's face flushed deeply, and he was about to give a sharp answer, when Kitty, who had kept silent till then, burst out:

"Oh, my uncle, for my sake don't be obstinate. How shall I feel, all alone in this vessel, if you are in irons? I should be ashamed to hold up my head. And after all the kindness that Mr. Eaton has shown us. Do, for my sake, give your parole. You have tried to escape, and he has forgiven you. Do try to forgive him for taking you a prisoner. What shall I do, all alone in this schooner, when you are away from me?"

The only answer of the obstinate old man was:

"Of course I am aware that your position will be a hard one; but I have my duty to perform, and I am going to do it. If the frigate had taken this schooner, we should have been all right, and these men would have gotten their deserts. If that captain treats you with anything like insult, I shall not be surprised. It is like a Yankee to insult women in distress."

Kitty burst into tears, and began to sob.

"Oh, how unjust, how cruelly unjust! He has never done anything but kindness to us, and you knew it."

The colonel looked decidedly uncomfortable at the tears of his niece; and Folger, who had listened to the whole without a word, now fidgeted and looked at his commander, who understood the glance.

Eaton rose and ended the colloquy with these words:

"Colonel Maddox, in stating what you have in regard to the possibility of my insulting your niece, you have done me a wrong which you will one day be the first to own, if I am not very much mistaken in your character. For the present you are not a dangerous person to the safety of this schooner; and, as I do not desire to use unnecessarily harsh measures, I shall not exercise the right I have to put you in irons. You are at liberty to share the hospitality of the schooner, if you think it will not choke you to eat the bread of a Yankee. If a British ship heaves in sight, it will, of course be my duty, in view of the safety of all my passengers, to put you in a place where you cannot endanger them, for the gratification of your own spleen. This grace you owe to the fact that you have been rash enough to bring on board the schooner this young lady, whose intercession has saved you from indignity. You will consider yourself under arrest for the remainder of

the voyage, and will not be allowed to converse with the people of the *Saucy Jane*, on any pretext. Oblige me by going to your state-room, sir."

Then he gave a stiff bow, and left the cabin to go on deck, where he passed the rest of the night, while *Kitty*, whose heart seemed to be broken by this sudden explosion between him and her uncle, whom she loved dearly, at the same time she knew *Eaton* was right, went to her state-room and wept the whole night.

What happened to the colonel in the night, no one knew, for the old man kept his room closely; but in the morning he did not come to breakfast till the rest of the cabin had finished, and he was waited on by the steward, who refused to say a word in answer to the questions with which he was pried.

Maddox grew very angry at what he called "insolence," but the steward was imperturbable, and the veteran had to put up with it.

After breakfast the old soldier undertook to go on deck; but was stopped by the steward, who said quietly:

"Orders is to stay in arrest, sir. *De gyard* is outside, and if you gits mad 'bout it, I'se got to call him in."

He pointed out of the cabin door where a sailor, with a cutlass in his belt, was pacing up and down the main deck, as if on guard.

The colonel went into his state-room in a terrible passion, and slammed the door.

When dinner was served he came out and opened a tirade of abuse on *Eaton*, who thereupon left the cabin, with the observation:

"When Colonel *Maddox* has come to his senses, he will see that his conduct requires an apology."

Kitty left the table at the same time, with her handkerchief at her eyes, and the old sailor who had no appetite after the nervous excitement under which he was laboring, went back to his room and had the pleasure of listening to the voices of the two mates discussing his behavior with more frankness than delicacy, with frequent allusions to what they would do if such a thing were attempted with them.

"If I was skipper of this here craft," said the heavy voice of *Hackett*, "I'd take the old fool and trice him up in the rigging, with the boatswain's mate and a good cat to teach him manners. I don't believe in this fine-gentleman way of doin' biz. One man's as good as another and a darned sight better. What in thunder's got inter the Cap, anyway, *Folger*? He used to be a reg'lar tiger when he was insulted, and here he lets this old fool give him all the guff he's a mind to."

"Starn all," the voice of *Folger* replied: "You ain't supposed to know what goes on in Cap's mind, are ye? This old fool has a lot of cash aboard, and the Cap don't like to take it. I say he's a darned fool for his waitin'; but I've heard say that, if the man who owns the money kin be caught in the act of breakin' the law, it's all right, if some one shoots him, and then the money becomes ours. I ain't sayin' it's so; but it looks mighty like it to me. Cap wouldn't take all he does from him, if he hadn't a reason."

"How much is there, d'ye reckon?" asked *Hackett*, eagerly.

Folger lowered his voice to answer:

"Over a million of dollars, I hear them say as knows. The boys c'u'd have a tearin' ole time over it, c'u'dn't they; and I wouldn't hev to go to sea no more, till I felt like. Tell ye what, *Hackett*, I've a good mind to tell the men, and then the captain couldn't let the old cuss go without payin' fur his impudence."

Maddox heard the threat and his heart sunk within him. He knew that the secret of his property had been kept well by *Eaton*, and for the first time he began to feel afraid the men of the privateer might get wind of it. That her two officers knew the fact, and had hitherto concealed it from the men, became plain from their conversation.

Maddox had a horror of privateersmen, that had induced him, in the first place, to hide all his money; but when he had been treated so well by *Eaton*, he had confided to that gentleman alone the fact that he had two hundred thousand pounds sterling in the Madras, which sum had been brought on board the schooner.

If the crew of the *Saucy Jane* once got wind of the fact that there was enough money on board to make them all rich, the old soldier knew that no sense of discipline could be relied on to keep his property from the clutches of sailors, already angry at him for lighting the port-fire at the cabin windows during the fight with the boats of the English frigates.

The words of the mates made him feel very uncomfortable; for he could not but acknowledge to himself that he had been trusting to the generosity of *Eaton* all this time, to keep him from letting out the fact to the crew. Under the laws of war at sea, as they then stood, the money of a private person, though theoretically his own, was subject to so many risks of being adjudged "contraband of war," that it was not safe to trust it to the mercy of an admiralty court. The fact of the colonel being in the East India Company's service, was another thing against him, and the bold veteran

began to feel he might better draw in his horns, and acknowledge he had been wrong.

It was a bitter pill to swallow, for a man like *Maddox*; who had been accustomed of having his own way all his life; but he was too fond of his money to hesitate. That money had cost him more than his life was worth, and he would have done *anything* to save it.

Having once decided to yield, he sent word to the captain he "should like to see him for a moment, to apologize for his rudeness at the table," and the message brought about a change in the relations of all on board the schooner, in ten minutes. The veteran, with an appearance of great unwillingness, made his apology to the commander of the schooner, and received from *Eaton* a full and generous forgiveness that actually affected *Maddox* with a feeling of contempt that any man, in war time, could believe his apology sincere.

Eaton, on the other hand, while he saw through the colonel's real motive, and had actually given the mates of the schooner directions to talk as they had, in the hope of frightening the old man into civility, had no difficulty in pretending to think the repentance of the colonel sincere. He knew that, with the girl on board the schooner, he could not treat the old soldier with the severity he deserved. He could not appear in *Kitty Clayborne*'s eyes in the light of a brute. Exactly why he thought this he could not explain.

He was, as he had told her, a married man, and one, moreover, who loved his wife dearly, though he was attracted by the face and figure of *Kitty*, and by her remarkable qualities.

He felt that he was playing with fire, and yet he had been unable to get rid of her presence on the schooner without a rudeness of which he could not be guilty.

Her uncle had brought her on board, and had refused to go away, though he had been told, over and over, in plain terms, that his room would be preferable to his company.

Now they were shut up in the same vessel for an indefinite period, and there was no telling what might happen; for the schooner was going out into the Atlantic again to look for more prizes, and the enemy were, of course, getting more and more cautious every day.

The description of the *Saucy Jane* was sure to be in the papers of every cruiser that wore the British flag, and it was more than likely ships would be sent out especially to fight her.

Cannon-balls are no respecters of persons, and it made the young captain shudder to think of what would be the position of *Kitty Clayborne*, should anything happen to himself or to her uncle.

Had he not been at sea, he would have insisted on her remaining in France, at the cost of being boorish to her: but he had no recourse now but that of hoping for the best, and trusting to luck.

In this frame of mind the captain of the *Saucy Jane* sailed on, and the schooner got into the trade-winds, which wafted her from off the southern coast of Spain to the Azores; off which islands she had met the Madras and United States; thence to the Bahamas, in the same track that Columbus had followed three hundred years before.

Day by day the scene grew more tropical and pleasant to the eye, as the *Saucy Jane* entered the outskirts of the famous "Mare Sargasso," where the sea-weeds grew so thickly that the schooner was obliged to keep out of the entanglements, till they carried her several degrees out of her way. The sun grew hotter, in spite of the advancing winter, for the month of November had passed, and December was fast going in.

The schooner sailed along in the listless fashion of a cruiser looking for something to devour, but, to the astonishment of her commander, not a sail was seen during the whole trip from the Azore Islands till the *Saucy Jane* reached the West Indies, and then the sails were of a character that precluded any desire to make further acquaintance.

In other words, they were all ships-of-war, and the neighborhood swarmed with them, so that the schooner had to exercise great caution, to avoid being caught with the wind in an unfavorable state, when any frigate would have made short work of her, if she once got under its lee.

Once *Eaton* was tempted to try conclusions with a brig which chased him and threw nothing but carronade shot at him; but the brig showed such a turn of speed on a wind, that he dreaded the consequences if he once got fairly under her lee; so confined himself to keeping the weather-gage he had obtained.

The lightness of the winds that prevailed in the vicinity of the West Indies, at that time of year, enabled the schooner to get out of the neighborhood of the Caribbean Sea without serious danger; and it was not till she had crossed the line and come into the South Atlantic Ocean, that she began to find anything that might add to her prizes.

The month of December was almost over, and the men of the *Saucy Jane* were beginning to talk about celebrating New Year, when the

lookout called down to the deck, one fine morning, that a strange sail was in sight, toward the land of South America, and that it "looked like an Englishman."

CHAPTER XX.

OLD IRONSIDES TO THE FRONT.

The sail in sight proved to be a large frigate, under a cloud of sail, in a light wind, standing off the coast, in a way that convinced *Eaton* she was not cruising, but on her way to some port.

A cruiser would have been under short canvas, and would not have been so near the land, where there was no chance of catching any prizes.

She looked to be English, from the way in which her spars were rigged, with a plainness that told her nationality better than words. She wore no flag; but that counted for nothing. A frigate she was clearly, and an English frigate too. No French ship would have dared to be where she was.

French fleets had long ago been swept from the seas.

She was not American, for *Eaton* knew every ship that the American navy possessed.

He was not very uneasy at her vicinity, for he had the weather-gage on her, and the schooner was able to hold it.

Whether the English people saw him or not, they took no notice of the schooner.

The big ship glided on in a stately manner, with stunsails set, a low and aloft, her white canvas glowing in the light of the sun, like the plumage of a swan. With the glass *Eaton* could see that she was a thirty-eight by rate; for he counted nineteen ports on her gun-deck, the carriages above being invisible, on account of the absence of the usual black and white checkering, that marked the spaces occupied by guns.

It was late in the afternoon when he first sighted the stranger; and when night closed in, she was still not far from the land.

The wind at the time, was due east, light and baffling, and as the night closed in, it failed entirely, falling dead calm.

There was a moon that night, and *Eaton* kept a vigilant lookout for any signs of the enemy closing during the darkness, in case of a shift of wind. At midnight, a cat's-paw, from the north, sprung up; and as the night wore on, one of the men stationed at the knight-heads of the *Saucy Jane*, came ast to report to his commander that "he thought he saw a sail, off to the seaward side of the schooner."

Eaton took the glass and went forward to examine the appearance that had called forth this message.

After a time he perceived, down in the southern horizon, a white spot, that was undoubtedly a sail, though it was too far off to make out anything clearly.

About three in the morning, the wind again shifted, and began to come in puffs from the quarter of the compass, known as "East-north-east."

The schooner had been found at the noonday observation of the day before, to be in latitude 13.6, south of the equator, and the longitude of the nearest point of land in South America, in sight from the mast-head at dark, showed that the vessel was off the port of Bahia, distant about thirty miles.

The trend of the South American coast, at this point, is so much to the northeast, that the wind, as it came in at the close of the middle watch, was blowing along the line of the land, and the *Saucy Jane*, which had had the weather-gage at sunset, then found herself to leeward of the British frigate, at the distance of seven miles. *Eaton*, uneasy at this, set his canvas to claw off to the northeast, and regain the weather-gage, which had left him from the change of wind.

He did not go below all night, and when morning dawned, his first glance told him that the frigate could not catch him, though the other sail, which had made its appearance during the night, was so near him at daybreak that her position became a matter of anxiety to him as the light increased.

Slowly the sun rose up out of the sea, and the first rays set the little waves sparkling like diamonds. As the light increased, the wind from the northeast grew stronger and steadier, when the stranger was seen to be a large ship, and with all the marks of a frigate.

She was to leeward of the schooner, but only two miles away, and standing toward her, as it determined to close.

The British ship on the other hand, was so far off that no serious apprehensions were entertained about her, and the schooner's head was turned to the eastward to get still further out of the way of the new-comer, when *Eaton*, who had not had a good view of her, suddenly cried out, in a tone that showed his satisfaction, and was heard by the whole crew on deck at the time:

"Down helm! Let go the jib-sheets! Ease away the fore and main-sheets, and let her run down on that frigate. Boys, it's OLD IRONSIDES!!!"

He had recognized, in the light of day, what

The Three Frigates.

had escaped his notice in the gray dawn, that the stranger wore the long sky-poles and trim spars of an American frigate; and, from his acquaintance with the Constitution, knew his old ship in a minute.

The excitement of the crew at the news was indescribable, and so wild, that the cry spread through the forecastle before the captain's words had had time to be fairly repeated.

The watch on deck shouted down to their comrades below that "Old Ironsides was in sight," and the men below came running up the hatchway-ladders like madmen, yelling as if they were crazy; the commander of the schooner not having the heart to stop the noise, so much did he sympathize with the joy of the men.

Old Ironsides it was, and the least particle of doubt was removed from the minds of all, when the stranger threw out the stars and stripes to the breeze, in answer to the flag of the schooner, as the two Yankee vessels, man-of-war and privateer, came running up to meet each other.

The distance, that had seemed to be the only hope of the Saucy Jane, if the new sail had happened to be an enemy, was overcome in a few minutes when both parties had made up their minds to come together, and Eaton was under the broadside of the Constitution in a very short time, shouting gleefully:

"Constitution ahoy! How is Commodore Hull?"

The frigate threw her maintopsail to the mast, as he checked the way of his own schooner by luffing, and the face of the officer of the deck looked over the side of the ship to answer:

"The commodore was very well when we last heard from him, sir; but we left him in New York. Commodore Bainbridge is in command of this ship now. What schooner is that?"

Eaton was so surprised to hear the news of Hull's change, that he had almost forgotten to give the name of his own schooner, when he was recalled to himself by a sharp repetition of the question and answered:

"The Saucy Jane, privateer. I thought Commodore Hull was on board, or I would not have hailed you in such a free-and-easy way. I beg your pardon. Shall I send a boat on board?"

"At once, if you please," was the stiff answer of the officer of the deck, a young man, a stranger to Eaton, and one who thought he was condescending to hold converse with a privateersman. Eaton took his gig and went on board the Constitution, to be met at the gangway by this consequential young officer who boldly asked:

"Name, sir, if you please. Don't come aft, till you're told."

"Eaton," replied the privateersman, who had become used to this treatment by naval officers, as if they thought he had come on board to steal the spoons. "Give my compliments to Commodore Bainbridge, and tell him that I was the officer who brought him the news of his release from the prison at Tripoli, when the Constitution shelled the town and forced the Dev to give up the Yankees."

The young officer stared as he heard Eaton speak, and his face grew sour as he said:

"Stay here, if you please, till I see if the commodore will see you or not."

Then he left the privateersman standing at the gangway, while he went to the quarter-deck to the commodore. Eaton watched him give in his report with some interest, for he remembered Bainbridge, and knew that the latter would remember him. As a matter of fact, the commodore had been one of his warmest friends, at a time when he wanted for friends, and Eaton knew Bainbridge would not suffer him to be treated with rudeness.

He was near enough to hear the colloquy that took place.

The young man saluted and reported:

"The master of the schooner came on board. Says his name is Eaton, and claims to know you, sir. I didn't know whether you would like to see him; so I left him at the gangway."

The old commodore turned round and favored the youth with a look that caused him to color violently, as he asked:

"Did I give any orders that I did not wish to be disturbed, sir?"

"No, sir; but—"

"Go back to the gangway, sir," interrupted the commodore with severity, "and apologize to the gentleman for your inexcusable rudeness. Tell him, with my compliments, that I shall be very much pleased to see him at once, and here."

Then, as the mortified young man turned away to execute the order, he added:

"Mr. Eaton is an old friend of mine, and I am very glad to see him."

The young officer came back to Eaton, and said in a low voice:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I did not know who you were. The commodore will see you on the quarter-deck at once."

Eaton followed his conductor to the quarter-deck, and found himself confronted by the well-known face and figure of Commodore Bainbridge, whom he had not seen for a good many

years though the commodore had sent him once, in the depth of his troubles, a letter of hope and encouragement, that had done more toward giving him patience than anything else except the love of the lady to whom he had been engaged.

Bainbridge met him with great warmth, and introduced him to all the officers of the frigate, among whom, to his great surprise, he found only one or two who had been on board the ship in the month of August, when she had taken the Guerriere.

Old Ironsides had shipped a new crew and had a new set of officers, as if she meant to show the world that all the officers of the vigorous Yankee navy were able to hold their own with anything that John Bull could put afloat.

The introduction over, the commodore took Eaton down to his cabin, and asked him if he knew anything about the sail in sight.

"All I know about her is that she is an English ship-of-war, and rates as a frigate of thirty-eight guns, like the Guerriere."

"Then before the sun sets we shall have her," was the reply of the commodore. "That is," he added, "if she does not run away."

Eaton shook his head.

"She will never do that, sir. I will give the English credit for that. They will never run from a fight, though they know they are going to get most unmercifully whipped. John Bull is game to the backbone, and that is why we have whipped him so thoroughly. That frigate will fight you as hard as the Guerriere did Captain Hull. You know I saw that fight, and in fact, had the honor of being the prime cause of it."

Bainbridge smiled, as he answered:

"Yes, I heard about that from Hull. You know, I suppose, why Hull would not stay at sea in the ship he commanded so well?"

"No, sir; I have no idea."

"Well, it is a shame that people should talk about a man because of his relations; but you know that Hull had a relative in the army, and it seems that he has surrendered Detroit, in a manner that has caused him to be court-martialed. Our Hull was so mortified that he refused to come to sea again, fancying that every one would be accusing him of cowardice, on account of his uncle. I told him he was foolish to think so, and offered to give up the place to him, but he was inflexible; said he had had enough glory for himself, and that all of it could not wipe out the stain on his name. By the by, Eaton, he was on the court-martial which tried you, wasn't he? Well, he knows how it feels himself to be implicated in the bad conduct of others."

Eaton colored slightly as he answered:

"Pardon me, commodore: but commodore Hull has long ago, in the kindest way, relieved me from any obloquy in the Chesapeake affair; and I have for him none but the most affectionate and respectful feelings. He fought this frigate nobly, and carried her out of action, with all her spars across, as she entered it."

Bainbridge held out his hand.

"You are a noble fellow, Eaton; but I must say I feel for you more than you seem to feel for yourself. So Hull took the old barky into action well, did he? Inside of the next twenty-four hours she'll take another British frigate, in as good style as she was handled before."

Eaton shook the proffered hand, and said, as he rose to go on deck:

"I fully believe it, commodore, as I have had the happiness of seeing two Britons whipped this year already. Had Commodore Decatur got back to New York when you left, sir?"

Bainbridge shook his head.

"Decatur? No, I don't think he had. He went off in the United States soon after Hull returned. We came out on the 26th of October, and have been dodging about ever since."

"Then I am happy to inform you, sir," said Eaton with some triumph, "that I witnessed the capture, on the 19th of October, by the United States, of the British frigate Macedonian—thirty-eight—in as good style as ever a ship was taken by another ship."

Bainbridge grasped him by the arm, and cried excitedly:

"Do you mean that, Eaton?"

"I do sir."

"Then come on deck," cried the commodore. "As the bringer of good news, you are more welcome than any man I have seen for the whole voyage. Come, sir, come!"

And before he could tell what was the meaning of it all, Eaton was dragged on deck, where the commander of the frigate called out to his officers:

"This way, gentlemen all; I have something to tell you. Mr. Eaton tells me that our frigate United States, under Decatur, took the British frigate Macedonian, in good style, on the 19th of October last; and she was the same force as the Guerriere, which was, as you know, taken by this ship in ten minutes."

"Yonder, inshore, is another British frigate, which looks to me to be of the same class as the Macedonian and Guerriere. I have only this to say, and I want you to listen to me: for I mean it. If we fail to take that ship in the same style

as the Guerriere, I shall never hold up my head again. We are just at the close of the year, and have time to celebrate it by taking another Britisher. Who is willing to help me do it?"

He was interrupted by a tremendous shout from the sailors, who had caught the words, as the enthusiastic commodore spoke them aloud. Discipline to the contrary, the sailors of the Constitution roared aloud their joy at the chance of meeting their foes on the sea.

The commodore heard the shouting, and his face turned as red as a beet with confusion, for Bainbridge was a strict disciplinarian.

"What does this mean?" he cried angrily to the officer of the deck. "Is this an American frigate, or is it a whaler, with all hands drunk? Stop that noise, sir, this instant!"

Then his features relaxed as he saw the shame-faced look of the men, who fancied he was really angry, and he added aloud:

"Never mind, Mr. Bloke. I guess the men will fight none the worse for going into action with a will. Fill the maintopsail, sir, and put the ship on her course to meet that Englishman."

Then the captain of the privateer took his leave of Bainbridge, and the last sight Eaton got of the decks of Old Ironsides, the crew were working like beavers at the braces, and the noble old ship was swinging round her head to seek the strange frigate.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE THIRD FRIGATE.

WHEN the privateersman got back to the schooner, he found Kitty Clayborne on deck, looking as if she had just run up, hastily dressed, at the sound of the noise on the Constitution. The girl looked as if she was but half-awake, and the colonel was not up yet.

Kitty looked up at the huge bulk of the frigate close beside the schooner, and asked innocently:

"Why, where did she come from? I thought she was on the other side by the shore?"

Then she looked round toward the coast of South America, and saw the other frigate that had arrested her attention the night before, without knowing why, for Eaton had told her that the stranger was only a merchant ship in ballast, going to Rio for coffee, and she had believed him, in her innocence.

But the near presence of the American frigate showed, even to her, as a ship-of-war, for the guns, and the uniforms of officers and marines, were plainly to be seen.

"Woo is that?" she asked Eaton, when he did not answer her first question. "Is she one of your own ships?"

His tone was one of triumph, as he told her:

"Miss Clayborne, that is Old Ironsides, that you have heard me speak of so often, the Constitution, in which I served as a midshipman, and which took the Guerriere last August. There is going to be another fight, and if you do not want to see it, you had better go below."

Kitty looked all round the horizon, and gave a heavy sigh, as she said to him, in a tone of sadness:

"Ah, Mr. Eaton, it is not the same as it used to be with me. I used to think I should like to see a battle; but now I have seen one, I don't want to see another. That coming out of Brest was too much for me. I shall never forget those men, as they fought like wild animals, more than human beings. Can we not get out of the way? I am getting cowardly, I think. Who is going to fight?"

Eaton looked at her closely and saw that she was indeed trembling as if afraid, so he answered:

"Certainly we can get out of the way, if you please. We have no business to interfere, and we shall be in danger as we were when the United States fought the Macedonian, if we do not get out of the line of fire."

"Line of fire?" echoed Kitty, stupidly, looking round her. "Why, what, where, who is it?" I don't understand. Are not you going to fight?"

"We! Oh, no, child, we have no occasion. It is the frigate, out yonder. She has the look of an English ship, and Old Ironsides is after her."

Kitty turned redder than there was any necessity for, as she stammered out, confusedly:

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure; but I thought that it was you who was going to fight, and I am getting so nervous since that terrible night. Is it only a fight with the big guns? That is nothing."

And she actually laughed at the idea, while Eaton looked at her in astonishment at her words, and said:

"Nothing indeed! You might change your mind if you were on board that English frigate."

As he said the words, Colonel Maddox, who had the Indian habit of early rising, came on deck, and saw Old Ironsides, with her flags displayed, while the sun shone on the red ensign of England, at the peak of the English frigate, now about four miles away, under the shelter of the land.

The old soldier took in the situation in a mo-

ment, and came up to Eaton, to whom he said in a low voice:

"Mr. Eaton, a word with you apart."

The privateersman walked aside with him, wondering what his singular guest or prisoner might be going to say, when the colonel began:

"Mr. Eaton, I owe you an apology for my violence a short time ago; when I failed in my attempt to escape from your schooner, and to have her taken. Yonder is one of his majesty's ships-of-war. There is a chance that you may be taken, is there not?"

Eaton laughed.

"Not the slightest in the world, colonel. On the contrary, there is every chance that your frigate will be taken by the Constitution. She took the Guerriere, a ship of the same rate, in ten minutes, last summer; and she has no worse commander to-day than she had on that occasion. The chances are that yonder ship will be in American hands in a very few hours. You have seen one English frigate handsomely whipped, and now you are about to see another."

The old soldier ground his teeth, as he heard the confident assertion, and retorted:

"This bragging before a battle is all very fine; but I like the man that waits till it is all over. What I want to ask you is this: will you let me take my niece on board that English frigate, and share her fortunes. I am content if she is beaten; but I do not feel I am a fair prisoner yet. I have never had a fair chance. Put me on board that frigate, and I will guarantee she offers you no harm."

For a moment Eaton was too much astonished by the speech to make any answer; but the colonel, mistaking his silence for refusal, added:

"I know the request is singular, I have no right to make it; but you have been already so kind that I ask it as a last favor, for the sake of my niece."

"Of your niece!" echoed Eaton incredulously. "Does she want it?"

Maddox came closer to him to say:

"My dear sir, in confidence, it cannot have escaped your observation that my niece is very young and impressionable, and that she has been greatly taken by your personal character. I am not so blind as I seem, and I have noticed a great deal I have never mentioned. In consideration of what might happen, if I were suddenly taken away from her, I beg of you to let me go aboard the English frigate. If I am taken prisoner fairly, I shall make no further complaint. But, in that case, I shall be a prisoner-of-war, and we shall be taken by a ship-of-war and not by a privateer."

Eaton laughed as he answered:

"Colonel, I think you forget one thing, that, if you get taken on board that ship, your money will all be forfeit, as contraband-of-war, and you will be liable to be put in prison in America, till the war is over."

"I take the risk of all that, sir," said the veteran stiffly. "As for the property, it is on your schooner, and at your mercy. If you please to become responsible for it, I will put it into your charge; but I am resolved to go on board that frigate, if you will put me there. I have lived under that flag, and I am resolved to die under it, if I can get a chance. Will you do it?"

There was something in the words, and especially in the tone, and looks of the old man, that impressed Eaton; for he had never heard the colonel speak so before. He was not in a passion; for he spoke calmly; but there was an air of earnest conviction on his face, a ring in his voice, that told how much he was in earnest.

"I have an atonement to make to my country," he went on, "for having disgraced her by my conduct. I broke an implied parole, and you have shown me unexampled kindness, in spite of all that. I want to go on board that ship and offer my services as a volunteer, to fight the Yankees fair, for the last time in my life. I will tell you how you can get me on board, without compromising the safety of your schooner. Give me a boat, and I will row myself to the frigate, with my niece. The sea is quite calm, and there is no danger. I ask no more."

Eaton shook his head.

"Colonel Maddox, you know not what you ask. You have no idea of the slaughter that will take place in that ship, before the sun sets. She is commanded by a man who will not escape death by early surrender. He will fight to the last, and when the ship is taken, she will be a wreck. In that conflict you will be but one more to be killed, and there will be enough without you. For the sake of your niece, do not go."

"It is for her that I must go," said the veteran, obstinately. "She cannot stay here, much longer; and on the ship, yonder, she will be among her countrymen, and perhaps countrywomen."

Eaton looked at him with some malice, as he asked:

"Why did you not leave her among them when you had a chance?"

"Because I was a fool. I thought I could help her this schooner, and so make a great

deal of prize-money. I failed in that, and I want to retrieve my character, by doing something that will be of credit to me, instead of the reverse."

As the colonel was evidently in earnest, and meant what he said, the privateersman was seriously embarrassed what to do; and said to Maddox, in order to dissuade him from his mad project:

"But how can you tell, if I were to go near the English frigate, that she would not consider me fair game, and claim me as a prize?"

"That is why I ask you only for a boat, to go there myself," was the obstinate answer. "Come, if you are determined not to allow me to go, then at least put me in irons, as you ought to do, for I shall certainly try all I can to help my own countrymen in this fight. You may laugh, but I assure you that I can do more than you think in their favor, on board your schooner. For instance, I can blow her up in the middle of the fight, and so attract the attention of the Yankee frigate, at the very time when she should be attending to her own business. Come, Eaton, let me go."

"Colonel, it cannot be done, and you know it. If no other consideration prevented it, that of the safety of your niece would be enough. I could not find it in my heart to expose her to the hazards of a sea-fight. She must remain on board the schooner, no matter whether you go or not."

To his intense surprise the colonel immediately said:

"The very thing I would have asked, if I had dared. The fact is, Eaton, I can tell when I see a gentleman, and I know you to be one. You have treated me and my niece with a delicacy and kindness that have won my heart, though I have not hitherto acknowledged it. I can trust Kitty with you, in case anything happens to me. Come, let me go at once, before the frigate gets so far off I cannot reach her. Will you do it, or must I swim for it?"

The old soldier actually went to the side of the schooner to suit the action to the word, and Eaton cried out hastily:

"Why, no, if it comes to that, you can have any boat in the schooner, and a crew to row you, too. But you are mad to think of it."

Kitty, who had heard nothing of what had passed, here interrupted:

"Why, what is the matter, uncle? Not fighting with Captain Eaton again, I hope. I thought you had made up all that long ago."

Eaton smiled with some constraint, as he answered:

"No quarrel, Miss Clayborne; but your uncle is insisting on doing a very foolish thing. He wants to go to yonder frigate—the English one I mean—and join her as a volunteer. That ship will be taken by the Constitution, in less than two hours after the action opens, and she will be cut to pieces, too. I insist that he shall not expose you to the chances of any such fight, and that, if he wants to go himself, he shall leave you behind."

Kitty colored high, as she retorted, with some warmth:

"Indeed, Mr. Eaton, you are mistaken in one thing. If my uncle goes out of this schooner, all the men on board her could not keep me from following him. Do you want to go, uncle?"

Maddox hesitated a moment, as he looked at her beautiful face.

"I don't want to have you in it, Kitty. You are a girl, and it is no place for a girl, to come in the midst of a camp of soldiers, or the fighting deck of a ship-of-war. The sights and sounds would sicken you, little one, and you would never forget them. But I must go myself, and I see no way for you but to come with me. Why won't you stay on the schooner?"

Kitty came close to him to say:

"You know well enough why, and it is no use to ask me. If you go, I go."

Maddox turned to Eaton.

"Sir, you promised me a boat. I claim the promise."

Eaton bowed low.

"Sir, I never go back on what I have said. You shall have the boat."

Then, turning to his first officer, he said aloud:

"Mr. Folger, man the jolly-boat, and row Colonel Maddox to the English frigate. I will signal to the Constitution not to open the action till you are safe aboard the schooner again."

Twenty minutes later, the boat from the schooner was close to the English frigate; the colonel and his niece were put on board, and Folger came back with the report:

"It's all right, sir. The Johnny Bulls are going to fight, and they've got a sight of sojers aboard. The ship's called THE JAVA."

CHAPTER XXII.

OLD IRONSIDES'S REVENGE.

The departure of the boat from the schooner, with the colonel and a lady on board, was viewed from the American frigate with a great deal of surprise. The commodore saw it from his quarter-deck, and could not understand it, till he read the signal from the Saucy Jane that told him.

"Non-combatants going to the English fri-

gate. They are prisoners, and demand to go to the flag of their own country. Please do not open the action, till the boat has returned."

The Yankee frigate obeyed the request the more easily, that the English ship had the weather-gage on her, and proved to be very fast. It thus became evident that, if the Englishman felt disposed to escape from the Constitution, in the light winds that then prevailed, the plan was perfectly practicable.

The distance between the two ships remained, at the end of an hour, the same as when the Saucy Jane and the Constitution had met to interchange salutations.

Five good miles divided them, and the Englishman had the weather-gage. The schooner was the only craft capable of overhauling the frigate, if she chose to run.

As the boat from the Saucy Jane returned to the schooner, after depositing her passengers on the English ship, the schooner made the signal: "THE SHIP IN SIGHT IS THE JAVA, THIRTY-EIGHT."

Then the captain of the Yankee frigate told his officers the news, and added:

"Before the sun sets we will add the Java to the list of our prizes. All I ask of you is to see to the sighting of your guns."

The officers of the Constitution dispersed to their stations, as the commodore finished and signaled to the drummer to beat the long roll.

The crew of the frigate went to quarters with a promptness and order that reflected credit on their discipline, and reminded one of the way in which Old Ironsides went into the contest with the Guerriere.

Then the schooner glided along, out of gunshot of the English frigate into a position from which her crew could see the whole conflict; and the Constitution tacked toward the enemy, with a view to close.

At the distance of five miles, when this action was taken, the Java was standing out from the land, and the gap between the two ships was rapidly lessened to three miles, when the English frigate, as if her commander seemed to realize he had a heavy fight ahead, hauled her wind, and stood off to the north again, to show that her captain did not feel disposed to fight, except at his own time and place. The land was at this time plainly in sight, and the time of day about nine in the morning.

On the Java, Colonel Maddox, who had been put on board that ship an hour before, was talking to an officer whose undress uniform was that of a general in the British service; and to him Maddox was holding forth, with great volubility, on the subject of the best way to beat the Yankees.

The captain of the Java, a man of middle age, with the appearance of an old sea-dog, listened to the conversation with an amused face, at the idea of landsmen talking about sea-fighting.

The general officer was General Hislop, of the East India service, for the Java was going out with drafts of men for half the ships in the East Indian fleet, and had on board, besides her regular crew, nearly a hundred and fifty extra men.

General Hislop listened to Maddox with a great deal more respect than was shown in the face of Captain Lambert, the commander of the frigate. He knew Maddox well, as an officer who had made a large fortune in India; and a large fortune, in any part of the world, gives its possessor a prestige that can be acquired in no other way.

"I tell you, general," the veteran was saying, "if we go at that Yankee frigate in the proper way, we can take her. She has more guns than this ship, and they are of heavier metal; but we can beat her if we close with her. We have, on board this ship, enough men to eat up the Yankees without salt, and we can do it too, if we go to work the right way. We must run down on her, and take her by boarding."

"Very good; don't you think so, Captain Lambert?" said Hislop in a doubtful sort of way. "Don't you think we can board her, and get the best of her in that way?"

Captain Lambert seemed to be struggling with an inclination to laugh at his adviser, both of them landsmen; but, inasmuch as Hislop, by reason of his rank, had a technical right, at any time, to take command of the frigate, in matters purely appertaining to fighting, the sailor was a little more cautious than he would have been if Maddox had been alone concerned.

It was with a deprecating air that he answered therefore:

"I will admit, general, for the sake of the argument, that we may be able to carry that frigate by boarding if we get alongside; but what do you suppose her captain would be doing, all the time we were getting there? You may not be aware that, in closing to board another ship, we would have to face her broadside, without an opportunity to reply, and that every shot the enemy fired at us would be a raker. You understand?"

Maddox interrupted:

"Of course we understand. You sailors think we understand nothing, except we have been brought up at sea. You mean that we should suffer a great deal. That is allowed."

Englishmen can stand punishment, can't they? I know all that; but I know that, if we succeed in closing, we can take that frigate by boarding."

Hislop nodded his head, as much as to say that there was a good deal of sense in that.

Lambert kept his temper. He was one of those English officers, whose eyes were beginning to be opened, at that early period of the war, to the fact that the Yankees, whom the English had been accustomed to despise, were, in fact, as good fighters as any to be found in the British navy. He had also heard of the fate of the *Guerriere*, in the previous summer, for the infuriated lords of the admiralty had insisted on trying Dacres for the disgrace of having hauled down the British flag, under any circumstances whatever; and, in the trial, the whole facts of the beating that Old Ironsides had given the British frigate had been exploited, to the amazement of the country. It had transpired that the *Guerriere* had received thirty shot between wind and water, and that she was in a sinking condition, when she finally took down her flag.

Lambert had not forgotten that, and he knew that the ship in the offing was the same that had taken the *Guerriere*, and that his own frigate was of the same class as that ill-fated British vessel.

Nevertheless, Lambert was not the kind of a sailor to run from an enemy, unless of such unquestioned superiority that resistance was out of the question. He had a just pride in the fact that his ship was one of the swiftest in the navy, and had a hope that by skill in maneuver, he might be able to make up the difference in strength between him and Old Ironsides.

"I tell you what it is, general," he said, presently; "if we are going to fight that ship, it must be done so we have a chance to win. See cannot catch us, at the rate the two ships are sailing now, and we hold the battle in our own hands. I can fight or not, as I please. You are my superior officer, and have the right to order me to fight; but if I do so, the management of the frigate must be left to me as a sailor."

"Certainly," was the ungrudging response of Hislop. "I am no seaman, and do I not intend to interfere in the matter, except as a volunteer. We must fight, or the Yankees will be able to say that one of his majesty's frigates refused action, and that is a disgrace that has never fallen on the navy since the days when Byng was shot for it. My only orders are that you engage the enemy, the details I leave to your own discretion, Captain Lambert."

Lambert bowed, and Maddox said, in a sulky way:

"All right, as long as we fight. I am only anxious that we shall not run away."

"You need have no fears of that," replied Lambert, stiffly. "The only question is whether we shall all come out of the fight alive. This is going to be no fool of a battle, I can tell you."

So saying, he sent for the carpenter, gunner and boatswain, with which officials he held a long consultation as to the state of their departments, and the probabilities of swift repair of injuries in the heat of action.

All this time Maddox was pacing the quarter-deck of the Java like a caged tiger, impatient to begin the action, while his niece was in the cabin of the frigate, in which, as Maddox had expected, he had found several ladies, wives of the Indian officers, going to India. These ladies had taken charge of Kitty, with much kindness, on account of her position, and were engaged in the cabin in getting from her all the particulars of her adventures for the last few weeks of her voyage since the Indiaman had been taken.

They had expected to find her a rabid Yankee-hater like themselves; but discovered, to their surprise, that the young lady was not disposed to talk about the Americans in any but the kindest manner. On several occasions she let it be seen that her sympathies were strongly on the side of America in the struggle with the mother country.

These discussions took up most of the morning, and it was noon when the steward told the ladies that "dinner was ready an hour earlier than usual, on account of the fight that was coming off with the Yankees, and that the captain had given orders the cabin should be emptied after dinner, when the ship was to be cleared for action."

This announcement was the first intimation the ladies had had that a fight was imminent, for the captain, with true British-tar politeness, had bidden the character of the ship in sight from the ladies till he had made up his mind to fight, and it became necessary to clear for action.

Of course, there was a general scene of excitement in the cabin, when this piece of news was given by the steward; but the ladies being officers' wives, with the exception of Kitty Clayborne, were not as hysterical as ladies in other spheres of life would have been. They were used to talking of battles, and had witnessed in the course of some of their lives a few skirmishes of the kind frequent in Indian history, where the English conquerors have held so many millions of Hindoos in subjection with a

force, at no time, in the last century, exceeding twenty-five thousand men of European birth.

The "garrison ladies" of the Java, though they did some crying, behaved, on the whole, with commendable calmness; and the only thing that disgusted them was the fact that the captain, in his anxiety to keep them from the dangers of a battle at sea, sent them down to the "run" of the ship, below the water-line. The run of a ship at any time is not a cheerful place of habitation; but when one knows that one is sent there to be out of the way of cannon-balls, that will soon be crashing overhead, the sensation with which the downward course is taken is different. As Mrs. General Hislop went down the dark ladder that led to the lowest of the ship's decks, and heard the water gurgling over her head as the frigate rushed through the waves, she asked the steward:

"Are you quite sure that no shot can get down here, steward?"

The functionary of the table, who had been in action before, made a respectful grin as he said reassuringly:

"Sart'in, my lady. We're below the water-line, and all the shots that hit the ship will have to git in above that. The sea turns them every time."

Mrs. Hislop did not seem satisfied, though she said nothing to show that she doubted the word of the steward; but, as soon as he had gone, she told the rest of the ladies that "if she heard the guns go off, and found the ship was not a safe place to stay in, she was going up on deck to tell the general to stop it."

Kitty Clayborne had gone down with the rest; and, for the first time, found herself in a position where she knew that a battle was about to begin over her head, and yet had no opportunity to see what was being done.

They had not long to wait after the ship had been cleared for action; for, in ten minutes, the guns of the Java began to speak, and from that moment the reports were incessant.

Kitty listened to it all with very different feelings to those which she had had when she had been on the deck of the schooner, and had witnessed the fight between the United States and the *Macedonian*. Then she had been a spectator; now she was a passive auditor of all that transpired on deck, without the knowledge of what it was, and whether the battle was going against or in favor of the Java.

The fate of her uncle on deck, (where he had been assigned, in common with all the army officers present, to the command of a gun, so as to utilize the military element on board the Java) was a constant cause of anxiety to her, in her confined prison.

That it was a desperate battle that was going on, and that the Java was getting punished severely, soon became patent to her.

The crashing sounds of shot overhead became so frequent that even Mrs. Hislop ceased to talk about going on deck, and realized that the ladies were in the only safe place on board.

The explosions of the guns of the Java, the crashing of the enemy's shot into her hull, were all that the women down in the run heard. The guns of the enemy were inaudible to them, on account of the nearer and louder reports of the pieces in their own ship. The shrieks and shouts of men, as they were struck down by the shot, also became too plain for the peace of the women in the run.

One by one they ceased to talk, and at last sat there, like statues of fright and sorrow, listening to the sound overhead, and wishing it would only stop for an instant.

The effect on the nerves of Kitty, after this sort of thing had lasted for some time, became so unendurable, that she slipped away from the company of her friends, and went to the ladder by which she had descended into the hold of the frigate, to investigate for herself what was happening on deck.

Down in the run it was so dark, that her presence was not missed, and the girl managed to reach the next deck of the frigate without meeting any one to stop her. It was a kind of fascination to her to go up, and she had no idea of what she was going to see, till she came into the cockpit, where the wounded are brought in time of battle, to be treated by the surgeon.

When the girl reached this spot, the first sight she saw was a man on the amputating-table, with the doctor cutting off his arm, which hung shockingly mangled, by his side. In those days there was no chloroform to deaden pain, and the poor man was groaning in a heart-rending manner, as he underwent the operation.

The surgeon looked as if he was worked to death which was the fact, and his assistant, who was holding the knives to hand to him as they were wanted, was so stoical and unimpassioned, that Kitty felt a thrill of horror and disgust as she looked at him.

For a moment she stood spellbound at the sight, and then turned to go back, where she could no longer see the blood and smell the sickening odors, that made the cockpit like a part of the infernal regions.

Only a moment she shrank back, however. Her mind was too full of anxiety for her uncle,

and she had seen in that brief glance, that he was not there.

With a shudder, holding her head averted, so as to shut out the sights and sounds of the cockpit as much as possible, she dashed past and ran up on the gun-deck, where she knew the men were fighting their best, from the constant reports of the cannon.

The gun-deck was dark, compared with the upper-deck, but it was a heaven of light in contrast to the horrible abyss of the cockpit.

The long lines of guns were there, and the men, stripped to the waist, were working like madmen, swearing at the guns when the rammers stuck in the bores of the pieces, which they seemed to be doing constantly on account of the heating of the guns by rapid firing.

Beside crews of the pieces lay already quite a number of dead bodies.

The officers were pale and anxious, with the frown of battle on their powder-stained faces, but there was something in the atmosphere of the gun-deck, swept as it was by the wind that blew through the open ports, that was to Kitty infinitely preferable to the stifling air of the run, or the still more horrible condition of the cockpit.

As the girl came on deck, a powder-monkey came running past her on his way to the magazine, and stared at her as if he had seen a ghost; but he said nothing, probably on account of his hurry, and Kitty caught a glimpse through an open port of a large ship, which she recognized as the *Constitution*, at the distance of about half a mile, running abeam of the Java and firing a broadside.

Up to that moment the girl had had, as we have mentioned before, a certain contempt for the firing of long guns at a distance.

She had seen it suffered and given with so much inaccuracy of aim that she had looked on it as a matter of luck, in which the chances were decidedly in her favor.

Now, for the first time, she saw a broadside delivered with the accuracy and force that had given the famous frigate before her such a reputation.

The flashes of the guns were sent forth with a regularity like that of clockwork, and the reports followed with the same mechanical precision.

CHAPTER XXIII.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

BEFORE the report of the first gun had become blended in that of the second, the shot began to come aboard the Java, and Kitty no longer thought that the fire of long guns was a matter of chance.

Crashing through the wood of the bulwarks, strewing the deck with splinters, knocking the men at the guns right and left like nine-pins, the terrible broadside swept through the doomed ship and left the gun-deck a charnel-house.

Still, to the wonder of the girl who stood as if spellbound, the men at the guns did not flinch from their work; and for the moment, she felt a thrill of admiration at their splendid courage, that conquered her fears.

With a wild, defiant cheer, that rang over the thunder of the enemy, they threw out their bare arms and then sent back their own broadside in a fashion that showed that the fight was by no means taken out of the Java.

The thundering reports of the main-deck guns, the cheers of the sailors, made her wonder what damage had been done by the broadside. She tried to peer through the smoke to see, but it hung over the water too thickly to be pierced; and the brave girl, still hunting for her uncle, ran up on the spar-deck, unnoticed by the men in the excitement of the contest.

There she saw for the first time the progress which the action had made, and the chances of success, as far as her knowledge could tell her.

The Java, with her topsails spread and her courses set, was running along with the wind on her port beam, gradually getting closer to the American frigate as she went and drawing ahead of her enemy.

The captain of the frigate, his face set and stern, was standing on the poop, peering at the enemy's ship, and, as the girl came on deck, she heard him give the order:

"Let her fall off! Down helm! Let go the lee braces! Haul on the weather braces! Steady! So!"

Obedient to the orders, the Java made a sweep round the bows of the American ship, with the evident intention of raking her. Kitty, without fully understanding the movement, yet saw that the Java would have an advantage if she succeeded in doing what she intended.

Watching the *Constitution* closely, she saw that the Yankee followed the motions of the English ship, with a fidelity that showed her commander was by no means asleep.

As the Java wore her head round from the wind, to cross the bows of the *Constitution*, Old Ironsides did the same, so that both ships executed a graceful curve and came up to the wind again, with their heads opposite to the position which they had occupied before, but running alongside and drawing closer all the time.

Then Kitty looked up at the spars of the Java,

and saw that the English frigate had already lost her maintopmast; that the foretopmast was all shot to pieces, and that it hung in the cap by a few ropes; the sail flapping idly to and fro, threatening to rock the mast out of its place in a few minutes.

Then came another interchange of broadsides, more fearful than before, and at closer range, and Kitty, for the first time in the battle, saw her uncle.

The old soldier, with the flush of battle on his face, his eyes all aflame with excitement, stood by one of the quarter-deck caronades, from whence one crew had already been swept, with the sponge-staff in his hand, while the men were training the piece on the enemy. Then the Java began to pass the American frigate, from her superiority of speed, and Old Ironsides turned again, a movement that the Java promptly imitated.

Thus the two ships kept circling round each other, like hawks on the wing, watching for the opening that was sure to occur, sooner or later, in such a close fight.

It came presently, as the frigates got within pistol shot of each other.

The Java gave a sudden sweep of her bows toward the Constitution, and the sound of a bugle brought a crowd of wild men, tearing up the ladders, from the gun-deck below, as the boatswain roared: "BOARDERS AWAY!!!"

Then Kitty knew what was about to happen. Her heart sunk within her as she saw the fierce faces of the men, and the equally savage countenances of the Americans, as they looked out over the bulwarks of the Constitution. The Java had closed, and her bowsprit ran over the quarter of the Constitution, when there was a great crash aloft. In a moment, the sorely-wounded mainmast and foremast, with what was left of the mizzenmast, fell over the side, and the Java lay, on the heaving sea, a total wreck, while the men of the Constitution raised a taunting yell of triumph.

The battle was over. Even Kitty, with all her ignorance, could see that. The fighting did not cease for some minutes; but it was of the sullen, desperate kind, that tells of hopeless and impotent anger.

The Americans, with that merciless spirit that characterizes the Anglo-Saxon race on both sides of the Atlantic, while armed resistance continues, however impotent, poured in another broadside of grape and canister, at short range, which swept the decks of the English frigate, and left, of the boarders, only a mob of fugitives, who fled below in dire confusion.

Then the Constitution swept out of the fight, and the unhappy Java lay on the smooth sea, a wreck as complete as the Guerriere and Macedonian had been before her.

As soon as it was seen that the Yankee frigate had gone out of the battle to refit, the silence of gloom took the place of the frantic excitement that had reigned on board of the Java before.

Colonel Maddox threw down his sponge-staff with a bitter oath of rage and despair, and his niece flew to him; when he recognized her for the first time. Instead of reproaching her, as she had expected, the old soldier burst into tears of grief, and sobbed:

"Oh, Kitty, Kitty. It is all over! The cursed Yankees were too many guns for us."

At that moment, Kitty felt she was English to the core, and wept with her uncle at the hard fate which had overtaken the ship. In the very last broadside that had come from the Constitution, a shot had struck Captain Lambert, carrying off his leg close to the body. The master, one of her lieutenants, and many of her other officers had been killed; while, of four hundred men who had appeared on the muster roll of the Java, sixty had been killed, and more than a hundred wounded.

The ship was a more helpless wreck than even the Guerriere had been before her. She lay in the trough of the sea, while her foe passed out to windward and began to repair damages with the same imperturbable coolness that had distinguished the conduct of her captain in the fight of the summer before.

An hour later the American frigate came down, her spars as trim as if she had never entered into action, and luffed up across the stern of the Java, on the wreck of which ship a Jack was still flying on the stump of the mizzenmast.

Old Ironsides backed her maintopsail and lay there, her ports open and her men at quarters; when the first lieutenant of the Java, now in command after the fate of the captain, hauled down the flag with his own hands, and the revenge of the noble old ship was complete.

The third frigate in one year had surrendered to American ships, and "the Hunting of Old Ironsides," off her own coasts, was a thing of the past.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

The city of New York, in the year 1813, was not much like that wilderness of bricks and mortar—to say nothing of brown stone, marble, and other fancy building materials—that we

are accustomed to associate with the name, in the present day.

The limit of civilization in those days was reached at the old "Collect Pond" where the City Hall now stands. On this pond Fulton and Fitch tried their first experiments in steam navigation, about the time that the quarrels between America and the mother country were drawing to a head.

The Battery was still the fashionable promenade of the city, and the old festivals were kept up with a heartiness that has long since vanished.

Chief among these, in that period was the birthday of the "Father of his Country," as he was endearingly styled—the immortal Washington. That, with the Fourth of July, New Year, and Evacuation Day, were the holidays of the infant city; and they were observed with an enthusiasm that found its expression in the firing of cannon and the display of bunting, with patriotic speeches, and an amount of private good feeling making up for the elaborate display that mark, in monarchical countries, the festivals of the nations.

Washington's birthday, in the year 1813, was one of the heartiest of the festivals, and was being celebrated with all the enthusiasm that could be desired, when the guns of Governor's Island, after the salute of the day, were heard to fire another salvo, that told the people of the city something had happened calling for more rejoicing.

As soon as this fact was plain, the people began to crowd down to the Battery, to see what ship was coming up the bay; for the guns were evidently fired to salute a new-comer.

In those days there were no telegraphs, and the semaphore was not used in America to the extent that it was in England and France. The system of signaling by flags was universal, and the news from the war was seldom known in any place, till it was brought in by word of mouth, by a special messenger.

The first stragglers that got to the Battery, found the river and lower bay full of ice, with a single clear channel in the middle, off Governor's Island, in which a schooner, with her lower sails set, was working her way cautiously along, to find an anchorage in some place where she would not be exposed to the chances of being cut down and sunk by the floating ice.

She wore American flags at all her mast-heads, and had a broad ensign at the peak of her mainsail, while her crew could be seen, on deck, around a single long gun, working it for all they were worth, to answer the salute of the fort without losing time.

The spectacle of the single gun, fired with marvelous rapidity, was so interesting to the people of the city, that they began to cheer as they saw it; for the American sailors of the schooner had relays, so as to be able to do their work more expeditiously. They seemed to be throwing the gun about, as if it were a mere toy, though it was of the largest size then used in ships-of-war.

But what attracted the attention of the people most, was the fact that a boat from the schooner, with a strong crew, was coming to the land, in spite of the floating ice, shoving the huge blocks aside; the men, every now and then, getting out of their craft and hauling it over the larger cakes, that intercepted the way.

The men were dressed in a sort of uniform, though it was easy to see that they were not regular man-of-war's-men, from the fact that some of them had on red shirts, a thing unheard of in any navy! On the shore, while the gazers were gathering, there was one person who seemed to be more excited than any one else, who was making preparations to meet the boat, in the same hazardous manner that she was coming to shore herself. This was a tall man, with the look of a sailor in his bronzed and weather-beaten face, who had succeeded in inducing some Battery boatmen—as smart and daring in those days as they have remained ever since—to take him out in one of their boats.

The people from the shore saw the two boats crossing the ice in the bay, the crews steering their way, in the cool and careful manner that marks men of skill and courage, till they met in the middle of the ice, and the oarsmen fraternized.

The tall man met another, who seemed to be in command of the boat from the schooner; and the people on shore could see them hugging each other, as if they had been children.

Then both boats came driving back to the shore, sometimes borne along by the floating ice, till it left them in clear water, when they would row a little way; and anon, taken to the white field again, till in this manner they finally reached the shore, and were welcomed by the people, with a burst of cheering that woke the echoes, over in Staten Island.

Then the tall man from the shore who was hailed by more than one as "Captain Blair" shouted out, in the style of a man who is going to make a stump speech:

"Fellow-citizens, I wish to say a few words."

There was an instant silence, for the American citizen is never so happy as when he is listening to a speech, and Frank Blair was well known as being what they then called a "mas-

ter-band at a Fourth-of-July speech, sure to catch on every time."

The captain jumped on top of a bench and waved his arms like a wind-mill, as he roared:

"Fellow-citizens of New York, I have only a few words to say to you, and I hope you'll listen to 'em. I'm the owner of the Saucy Jane, Privateer, that you see out there in the ice, looking for a berth. This gentleman is Captain Eaton, who has just come from a cruise in which he has taken three ships, and brought in a pile of money from the coffers of the darned Britishers. Only last summer he and I went out in the same schooner, and we had the best luck I had in all my life; for I got the handsomest wife, if I do say it, that shouldn't say it, that ever walked on shoe-leather. Now, Captain Eaton has done as well for himself as I did; for he has not only got a wife, but he has made a fortune for both of us, which was more than I expected in one voyage. But that ain't what I was going to say. Captain Eaton brings the news that he saw, on the twenty-ninth of December last, OLD IRONSIDES."

He was interrupted by a burst of shouting as the name of the famous old frigate became audible to the multitude, and they would not let him go on till they had given "three times three" in her honor. As soon as silence was restored, Blair went on:

"Shout away and crack your lungs. But you don't know what has happened yet. When I went out of this harbor, a year ago next summer, there was not a man who did not expect that every ship in our navy would be taken, before the war had lasted a year. Now hear the news. On the twenty-ninth of December last, the day when this gentleman saw her, Old Ironsides took another British frigate, named the Java, and never lost a spar in doing it. How do you like that for news?"

If the people had shouted before; they yelled themselves hoarse now. They seemed to be going frantic with excitement, and insisted on carrying off the bearer of good news on their shoulders to the nearest tavern, where Washington had held his head-quarters not so many years before, where they all got gloriously drunk over the tidings, and the guest of the day had a great deal of difficulty in making his escape, on the plea that he had not seen his family yet.

It was not till Eaton had got home to the little house, where his mother and wife were staying, and the schooner had reached a berth where she was sheltered from the ice, that any connected story of the events of the second voyage of the Saucy Jane could be given to the impatient Blair, who was burning to know all.

When he had heard it, and of the capture of the Java, with the subsequent destruction of that ship, to keep her from the possible chances of recapture by the British in her crippled state, Blair asked him:

"And what became of the Indian colonel you told me of, with the pretty niece, that had such a lot of cash on board?"

Eaton laughed, as he said:

"You'll never guess."

"Don't want to guess. I'm asking you."

"Well, I'll tell you, then. The colonel has been set ashore at the island of Jamaica, and the niece has married a Yankee."

Blair uttered a hilarious shout, as he exclaimed:

"Three cheers for the Yankee nation! Who is the man?"

"The second lieutenant of Old Ironsides. He came on board to take possession of the prize as she struck her flag, and behaved like a gentleman—that was all. You know those Britishers think we are a sort of savages, and the wonder they feel when they find out we are only human beings has a strange effect on the women. I suppose it is just to show that they have minds of their own; but they get obstinate as mules when they take a fancy to a fellow, and this girl took a fancy to young Pinckney when he came aboard the Java and bowed to the officer in command. I will say for Pinckney that he was by no means backward to appreciate the situation, and that he made bay while the sun shone; for he was on the wreck for two or three days before Bainbridge could make up his mind to destroy her. The English women, all but Kitty Clayborne, looked at him as if he had been a wild beast; and the contrast, I suppose, made him feel the kind looks of the little damsel more sensibly. At all events, he fell desperately in love, and finally made up his mind to tell her so, at my advice; for I had kept company with the frigate, at Bainbridge's request. The result of the matter was that Kitty accepted him provisionally, on the understanding that she was not to marry him without her uncle's consent."

Blair gave a thoughtful whistle.

"Just like Jane. Did you have to bring the old man to terms?"

Eaton nodded.

"I did; for I was anxious Pinckney should get the girl; and did not think the fortune, which I had spared when I might have seized it as contraband of war, ought to be carried off by some Englishman, when an honest American

had won the heart of the girl herself. So I put it to the colonel that, if he was willing to give his consent to the marriage of his niece, I should say not a word about his money, and he could keep it; but that, if he did not consent, then I should have to seize it. The worst point of the whole was that it was all on board of the schooner. It was a bitter pill to swallow; but he took it at last, and we put him ashore, at his own request, on the Island of Jamaica, with part of his money, while the girl takes the rest at his death, and is allowed an income, enough to make her and her husband comfortable for the rest of their lives."

What more is there that our readers can wish to hear, that we have not told about the fortunes of Old Ironsides? They have seen her, in her hunting, when the Britons, in all their power, chased her off the harbor of New York, and fondly thought to take her in triumph into Halifax. They have seen her, in her first exploit, by which she broke the charm for British invincibility, and they have seen her close a year of glory by the victory that turned the tables on the British navy, and shifted the burden of prestige, in a conflict which had seemed so one-sided, even to the cabinet of President Madison at the outset of the war, that it is on record that the official advisers of the Chief Magistrate, when pressed by Captains BAINBRIDGE and STEWART to allow the frigates in commission to "go out of the harbors, and try what they could do with the enemy," acceded to the plan on the distinct ground that "the ships would soon be taken, and that the country would thus be rid of the cost of maintaining them, and at more liberty to direct its energies to the army."

What a change had come over the country in one short, six months!

The President, United States, Congress, Argus, Hornet, and the privateer Saucy Jane, had sailed out of New York harbor on the 21st of June, 1812; and within the year, three British frigates had been forced to lower their flags.

The English no longer went into a sea-fight with the proud confidence inspired by the name of Nelson, which had been so long their Palladium of safety.

The prestige of success had vanished from their flag, and the young and vigorous Yankee nation had come to the front; Stars and Stripes at the mast-head; the inscription of "Free-Trade and Sailors' Rights," flung to the breeze; with an uniformity of success that had opened the eyes of the proud Britons to the fact that the empire of the seas was about to pass into younger and more generous hands.

The "year of glory" on the seas passed away, and the future had yet in store for the Americans their share of sorrows as well as triumphs.

They were to see the President, under the command of the gallant Decatur, who had represented so fiercely the surrender of the Chesapeake a few years before, forced to strike her flag at last, after a chase by overwhelming numbers.

They were to see that very Chesapeake, which had been the cause of all the war, taken in sight of the coasts of New England, and were to lose, one after another, some of the choicest brigs of their little navy. But the exploits of that year of glory could never be wiped out by any subsequent disasters, and the name of "Old Ironsides" had become a household word in all parts of the land when the war ended.

The first to encounter the enemy in force enough to render an engagement possible, the noble old frigate had sustained the reputation she first gained before Tripoli. She had taken every ship that had dared to fire a gun at her in anger, and had made of the GUERRIERE and JAVA names that the American people will never forget.

She had been hunted, but she had hunted her hunters back to their holes.

Old Ironsides had had her revenge.

THE END.

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